DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 374 022 SO 023 314

TITLE Poland. A Selection of Teaching Materials.
INSTITUTION American Federation of Teachers, Washington, D.C.; Educational Excellence Network, Washington, DC.; Freedom House, Inc., New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE [90]
NOTE 71p.; For related item, see SO 023 315.
AVAILABLE FROM Education for Democracy Project, American Federation of Teachers, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20001.
PUB TYPE Guides - Classroom Use - Teaching Guides (For Teacher) (052)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Democracy; *European History; Foreign Countries; *History Instruction; Instructional Materials; Maps; Poetry; Secondary Education; Social Change; Social Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Poland

ABSTRACT

This document is a collection of supplemental classroom materials on Poland to be photocopied for use in secondary schools in conjunction with the Education for Democracy's Classroom-To-Classroom project. The materials offer an historical framework for considering current events, as well as some insight into the events, ideas, issues, and personalities that have propelled Poland's successful movement towards democracy. A timeline and maps are included to give a basic historical context. Editorial cartoons, a resource guide, and suggested classroom activities also are included. The three maps included are: (1) central Europe, pre-World War I; (2) central Europe, post-World War II; and (3) Poland's shifting frontiers. The timeline stretches from 966 AD to 1991. Readings, grouped in five sections are: (1) a short history "The People Versus the Party" (Leopold Ungr); (2) excerpts from two Histories on Solidarity: "The Polish Revolution: Solidarity" (Timothy Garton Ash) and "Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland" (Norman Davies); (3) four Notes from the Underground from 1982; (4) Voices: "The Books of the Polish Nation" by national poet Adam Mickiewicz, "Poem for Adults" (Adam Wazyk), "If You Insist of Screaming Do It Quietly" and "Write Legibly" (Stanislaw Baranczak) and "Report from the Besieged City" (Zbignew Herbert); (5) Change is Comprised of five articles dealing with the internal forces that make change possible: "A Negotiated Settlement" (Jackson Diehl, "The Polish Kakeidoscope of 1989," in "Captive Minds: A Journal of Information and Opinion on Eastern Europe," "The Age of Solidarity" (Adrian Karatnycky), "Missing the Vote" (Maria Balinska), and "Polish Politics: Wale.a Runs for President (Adrian Karatnycky). Contains 28 references. (DK)

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ED 374 022

EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY PROJECT

POLAND

A SELECTION OF TEACHING MATERIALS

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TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

"It was realism which told us that one could not build enduring peace based on injustice and slavery. We learned this through our Polish experiences, but this is in fact a universal formula valid everywhere, in every geographical latitude and in every culture. ...Peace has to be the work of free people who speak for themselves."

LECH WALESA, November 14, 1989
before the AFL-CIO in Washington, DC

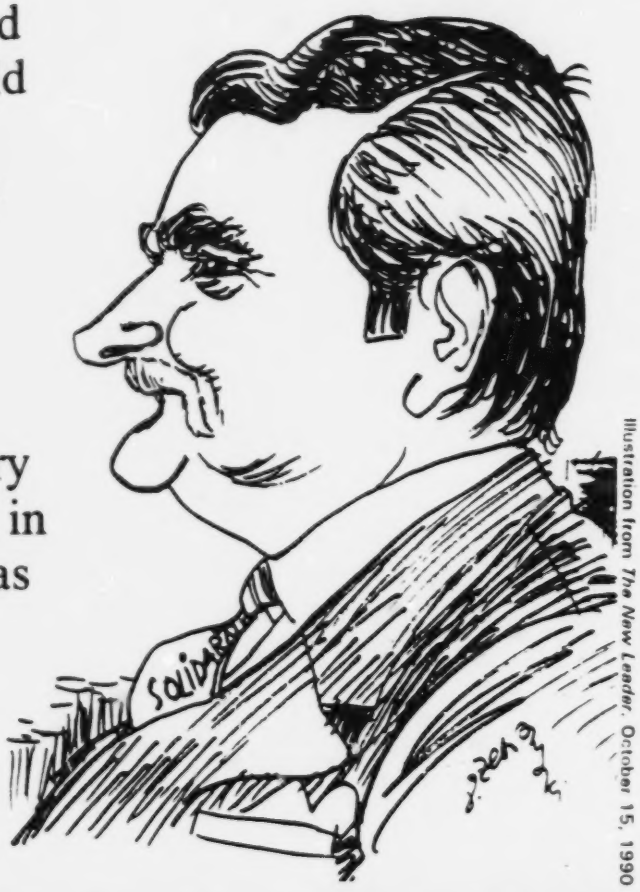

Illustration from *The New Leader*, October 15, 1990

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS, AFL-CIO

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NOTE TO TEACHERS

These supplemental classroom materials on Poland were produced by the American Federation of Teachers to be photocopied for use in secondary schools in conjunction with the Education for Democracy's Classroom-To-Classroom project.

Recent events in Eastern Europe mark a major change in the post-World War II world. After decades of Soviet domination and communist dictatorship, Eastern European countries are demanding and achieving democracy, human rights and an end to the Soviet Union's military presence.

The democratic revolutions in Eastern Europe should help American students gain a greater appreciation of and interest in the subject of history and attain a deeper understanding of the ideas and principles of democracy, for which millions of Eastern Europeans have risked their lives.

We hope that this collection of materials on Poland will offer an historical framework for considering current events, as well as some insight into the events, ideas, issues, and personalities that have propelled Poland's successful movement towards democracy. A timeline and maps are included to give a basic historical context. Editorial cartoons, a resource guide, and suggested classroom activities are also included.

Materials were designed to be used in American History, European History, World History, Area Studies or Current Affairs courses. We have tried to design the packet to be flexible enough to be used in many different ways. Some suggestions are:

- Using the material as a unit to be completed in one week to a week and a half. The timeline and maps can be handed out the first day, with each section as assigned reading for succeeding classes. Section questions can be used for homework, and students can be asked to pick one activity as a long-term project.
- The entire packet can be handed out at one time, with students given two or three weeks to read the unit. One or two classes can be devoted to discussion, and students can then be asked to choose an activity as a long-term project.
- In World History or European History courses, sections can be assigned as additional reading, scheduled to coincide with historical periods in the general course of study. Essays answering the section questions, or activities could be assigned, perhaps as extra credit.
- For students in World History, European History or Current Affairs courses who wish to do a term paper or project on Eastern Europe, both the packet and the resource guide can be offered.
- One or two reading selections from each section can be assigned to students. In American History courses, this could be done either to coincide with the historical period in the general course of study, or as supplemental material when U.S. foreign policy or U.S.-Soviet relations are being discussed.

We hope that the series of materials will be a useful contribution to the historical, current affairs and primary source resources available to U.S. educators. Suggestions and comments from teachers are welcome, please send them to:

Education For Democracy Project
American Federation of Teachers
555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

about the education for democracy project

Education for Democracy, a joint project of the American Federation of Teachers, the Educational Excellence Network and Freedom House, was launched in 1987 with a statement of principles signed by more than 150 prominent Americans. Its purpose is to encourage schools to impart to students the learning necessary for an informed, reasoned allegiance to the ideals and practices of a democratic society.

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CENTRAL EUROPE

PRE-WORLD WAR I

POST-WORLD WAR II

Warsaw Pact Member States

POLAND

GOVERNMENT:	Transitional democracy.
CAPITAL:	Warsaw.
SIZE:	120,725 square miles; slightly smaller than New Mexico.
POPULATION:	38,169,841 (1989).
RELIGION:	95% Roman Catholic, 5% Other.
ETHNIC GROUPS:	98.7% Polish, .6% Ukrainian, .7% Other.
LABOR FORCE:	44% Industry, 30% Agriculture, 11% Services, 15% Other.

TIMELINE

966	Prince Mieszko converts to Roman Catholicism and establishes Poland as a Christian Kingdom in the heart of Eastern Europe. An established community of Polish-Jews already exists and continues to grow throughout the centuries.
1308	The Germanic Teutonic Knights, invited into the Polish-ruled lands along the Baltic Sea to pacify and convert the pagan population, conquer and seize the territory. The Baltic inhabitants -- Prussians -- are quickly decimated and replaced by a Germanic population who are also called "Prussians." Periodic battles between the Poles and the Teutonic Order continue for several centuries.
1386	Wladyslaw Jagiello, Grand Duke of Lithuania, converts to Christianity to marry Jadwiga, Queen of Poland, thus uniting the two nations.
1573	The Polish nobility are among the first in Europe to establish limitations on the power of the monarchy. From 1573 to 1764, the nobility (10% of the population) elects Polish kings through the Parliament (Sejm).
1655	Sweden invades Poland and captures the capital and half of the c[illegible]ntry's territory. The Swedes are turned back at the monastery of Czestochowa, turning the tide of the war. "The Black Madonna," the icon of the monastery, is credited with the victory and thereafter becomes a national shrine.
1677	One of several Polish-Russian wars comes to an end; Poland's frontiers shift to the west.

1674	Jan III Sobieski is elected king. In 1683, he becomes a hero throughout Europe by his daring rescue of Vienna from the advancing Ottoman Empire.
1791	For several years, Poland is beset by internal instability. On May 3, 1791, in a last attempt to protect itself from its powerful neighbors, Poland adopts a democratic constitution. It is the second country, after the United States, to do so.
1793-95	The three great empires that surround Poland -- Russia, Prussia, and Austria -- continue to encroach on Polish sovereignty. Through a 1772 treaty, known as "the first partition," Poland had already lost 20% of its population and 25% of its territory. In 1793 and 1795, the second and third partitions completely erase Poland as an independent nation. The Poles become a subject people of the three empires.
1807	Napoleon of France defeats the Prussian Empire and creates the Grand Duchy of Warsaw from Prussian-occupied Poland. Krakow and western Galicia are added in 1809 after his defeat of the Austrian Empire. The Grand Duchy is given a constitution based on the French model, but is never granted full autonomy.
1812	Napoleon marches toward Moscow with 80,000 Polish soldiers accompanying the French army. He is defeated in the Battle of Moscow, and begins a forced retreat across Europe. Russia seizes the Grand Duchy.
1814-15	At the Congress of Vienna, establishing terms of Napoleon's defeat, Tsar Alexander I of Russia agrees to the reestablishment of a kingdom of Poland formed from a part of the Duchy, but maintains strict Russian authority. Prussia retains western and northern territories; Russia retains the eastern territories gained by the three partitions, and Austria retains its gains from the first partition.
1830s	In 1830, Polish military officers rebel and call for a national uprising. It collapses in 1831, but nationalist sentiment is still strong. Romantic poet Adam Mickiewicz gains heroic stature and becomes Poland's national poet. Tsar Nicholas begins a policy of eradicating Polish culture: universities are closed, attempts are made to undermine the Catholic Church, and the Polish language is barred from official and, as far as possible, unofficial discourse.
1863	In the same year that he frees the Russian serfs, Tsar Alexander II allows Poles under Russian rule to regain some privileges. However, a two-year war for Polish independence begins. The Poles are defeated and suffer mass executions and deportations to eastern Russia.
1905	The Russian army is defeated by the Japanese, initiating a period of political ferment and reform.
1914	With the outbreak of WWI, a small, armed group led by Jozef Pilsudski attacks the Russian army in the name of a free and united Poland. The effort fails. Germany (an Axis power) occupies Poland's eastern territories.
1917	In March, the Tsar is overthrown in Russia (called the "February Revolution" because of the old calendar). A Provisional Government is formed which pledges to establish democracy and to extract the country from the war. In November, following the new government's failure to end the war, the Russian Bolsheviks, led by Vladimir Lenin, seize power (called the "October Revolution").

The U.S. enters the war on the side of the Allies.

1918-19 In January 1918, Lenin dissolves Russia's elected Parliament and declares communist "soviet rule."

Although the Allies are gaining ground in the war, the collapse of the tsarist army allows German Axis forces to advance into Russian territories. On March 3, 1918, Germany and Russia sign the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, whereby Russia renounces all claims to Poland.

On November 7, 1918, Polish independence is proclaimed. On the 11th, Jozef Pilsudski becomes the nation's leader. On the same day, the German emperor surrenders to the Allies.

At the Paris peace negotiations, President Woodrow Wilson backs the cause of independence for Eastern and Central European nations. In the 1919 Treaty of Versailles, establishing the terms of peace, Poland is recognized as a sovereign nation, and is given heavily-German Baltic lands so that it will have access to the sea. The city of Danzig (Gdansk) is declared a free port, with Polish administration.

1920 In the east, the Allied powers could make no effective settlement. Russia attempts to limit Polish territory and to expand the Bolshevik revolution into Eastern Europe; Poland declares war. Polish troops advance as far as Kiev, then are pushed back by the Soviet Red Army, which advances to Warsaw before being defeated by Pilsudski.

1921 A peace treaty between the Poles and the Soviets is signed at Riga. It sets the eastern border roughly where it had been after the second partition in 1793.

1922 Pilsudski refuses to run for president. The candidate he supports wins, but is assassinated within a few weeks.

1926 After seven years of contentious parliamentary democracy, Pilsudski leads a coup d'etat. Although the parliament continues to function, Pilduski's authoritarian rule (either direct or indirect) continues until his death in 1935.

1930s Coinciding with the rise of fascism in Europe, anti-Semitism gains strength in Poland. In Germany, Hitler appeals to German nationalism as a justification for expansionist policies. Realizing the threat to German-populated Polish territories, Poland signs a treaty of alliance with France and non-aggression pacts with Germany and the Soviet Union.

1938 Hitler leads the "Anschluss" (annexing) of Austria. He then seizes the German-populated Sudetenland from Czechoslovakia. Despite a French alliance treaty with Czechoslovakia, France and England attempt to appease Hitler by negotiating the Munich Agreement, a peace treaty which grants Hitler all rights to the territories he has already seized by force.

1939 On March 15, Germany invades the rest of Czechoslovakia. Hitler demands that Poland relinquish all territory formerly under Prussian rule, specifically Gdansk and the "eastern corridor." The Poles refuse.

On August 23, Hitler and Stalin sign a nonaggression pact, an agreement which includes secret protocols dividing Central and Eastern Europe between the two powers.

In Gdansk, a staged uprising of Germans provides the pretext for Hitler's September 1st invasion. Despite reassurances of French and British military support, Poland has no time to mobilize. France and England declare war and WWII formally begins. On September 17, the Soviet Red Army invades Poland's eastern territories.

Despite valiant efforts by the poorly-equipped Polish army, the German Wehrmacht takes Warsaw in late September. In this fourth and final partition of Poland, among other areas, Germany takes the former territories of Prussia and extends its sphere of influence south to Romania; the Soviet Union takes Galicia and the former Russian territories in eastern Poland. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov hails the disappearance of the nation he calls the "monstrous fetus of the Versailles Treaty."

Led by General Wladyslaw Sikorski, a former Polish prime minister, a government-in-exile is formed in France. With Hitler's 1940 defeat of the French army, the government-in-exile flees to London.

An "Underground State" is formed inside Poland, which suffers under the harshest occupation regime in Europe. The underground state includes the Home Army (which becomes the fourth largest Allied army in the war), an underground press, and educational, judicial and administrative systems.

1940 The Soviet Union annexes the Baltic states of Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. In April, 15,000 Polish Army officers, imprisoned by the Soviets after the invasion, are taken from jail by security officers. They are never seen alive again. In 1943, 4,500 of their bodies are discovered by the Germans in a mass grave in the Katyn Forest.

1941 In June Hitler invades the Soviet Union, thus betraying the German-Soviet alliance. The Soviet government flees east as the Wehrmacht drives to the outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow. Caught by the Russian winter, the German army remains stalled for two years.

On December 7, the Japanese declare war on the U.S. by attacking Pearl Harbor. On the 8th, Hitler also declares war, forcing the U.S. to fight on two fronts.

1939-45 In Poland, the heart of European Jewry, the Nazis begin to prepare for the "Final Solution," a plan to exterminate all Jewish peoples in Europe. Decrees are issued to isolate Jews in guarded and barricaded ghettos; the largest is in Warsaw where 300,000 die. Christians who assist Jews are subject to immediate death by firing squad. Thirty six concentration and extermination camps are built in Poland, to which Jews from all over German-occupied Europe are brought. Two million Jews perish at Auschwitz in southern Poland, the largest death camp. Despite Sikorski's desire to assist the Jewish population, the Home Army insists that attacks on the German military must take priority.

Of the 500,000 Jews who were first herded into the Warsaw Ghetto, by April 1943 only 70,000 have escaped starvation or deportation to the death camps. Led mainly by youth, Ghetto residents launch an uprising. With only the arms they have stolen, they fight from April 19 to May 16. After regaining control of the Ghetto, the Germans level it to the ground.

(Before WWII, the Jewish population of Poland stood at 3.5 million. After the war, only 600,000 still lived. Most emigrate to Palestine or the U.S., far from the scene of horror. One key leader of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising is to remain; he is Marek Edlemen, who in 1980 becomes a leader of Solidarity.)

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1943 In the summer of 1943, the Red Army repulses the Germans at Stalingrad, Hitler's last great push to defeat the Soviet Union. The Soviets then begin a march across Russia and Eastern Europe that will take them all the way to Berlin. In an Allied conference in Teheran, Iran, the U.S. and Britain promise post-war concessions to the Soviet Union.

1944 In July Stalin lays the foundations for a challenge to the government-in-exile. In Moscow, he organizes members of Poland's Communist Party into the "Committee for National Salvation," and then grants them official recognition.

On August 1, knowing that Soviet and other Allied forces are nearby and expecting assistance, the Home Army attacks the Wehrmacht in Warsaw. The Soviet army, informed that the Warsaw Uprising has begun, approaches the city but then waits across the Vistula River for 63 days, intercepting all Allied arms intended for the Warsaw fighters. The Germans crush the Polish forces and, following Hitler's orders that Warsaw should be "razed without a trace," start dynamiting the city to the ground.

Stalin moves his Committee from Moscow to Lublin in eastern Poland, and then recognizes it as the provisional government of Poland.

1945 In January, the Soviet army finally moves in to "liberate" Warsaw. In February, the three great Allied powers, the U.S., Great Britain and the Soviet Union, meet at Yalta. Churchill and Roosevelt both insist that the provisional Polish government be composed of both the London and Lublin groups, which would then hold free and democratic elections with international observers. Stalin accepts this agreement, but sets about to undermine the government-in-exile with secret deportations of Home Army troops, the abduction of anti-communist leaders, and the establishment of the secret police.

In May, WWII ends in Europe. Two-thirds of Polish lands seized by the Red Army as a part of the Hitler-Stalin pact are retained by the Soviet Union. As a result, Poland loses most of its Lithuanian, Ukrainian and Byelorussian populations. As compensation, Poland's borders are shifted west to include German territory; most German residents are expelled or leave of their own accord.

In July, at a conference in Potsdam, the Allies recognize the Polish "Provisional Government of National Unity." Under pressure from Moscow, Communists are named to the Interior (police and security forces) and Defense Ministries.

1947 In January, the Communist Party, under Boleslaw Bierut (who claimed he was not a member of the Party) and Wladyslaw Gomulka, win a fraudulent election. A campaign of repression intensifies against non-communist political parties and trade union leaders, the Church, and other independent organizations.

1948 In December the Polish United Workers' Party [PZPR] is created from the forced merger of the Socialist Party with the Communists; the party leadership calls for collectivization and nationalization.

1949 Gomulka is ousted from the PZPR Central Committee, signalling an intensification of Stalinist repression, mass arrests and purge trials. In 1951 Gomulka is imprisoned.

1953 Stalin dies.

1955 As a counterforce to NATO, the Soviet Union organizes the Warsaw Pact, a formal military alliance between members of the bloc.

1956 In February, at the 20th Soviet Party Congress, new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev delivers his "secret speech," describing Stalin's great terror. The speech circulates widely, and sparks a chain reaction throughout the Soviet bloc. Gomulka, who was released from prison in 1954, is "rehabilitated."

In March, Edward Ochab succeeds Bierut as the head of the PZPR.

In June, at an international trade fair in Poznan, workers march through the streets, denouncing the government and demanding "bread and freedom." The demonstrations are violently repressed by police forces. According to the government, 53 people are killed, but the true number is believed to be much higher.

In response to the Bread and Freedom movement, in October Gomulka is reinstated as the General Secretary of the PZPR and promises reforms. On the 19th, Khrushchev secretly arrives in Warsaw while Soviet tanks are converging on Warsaw from East Germany, Czechoslovakia and the USSR. Khrushchev leaves the next day with assurances from Gomulka that Poland will not deviate from Soviet policy.

In November, the Red Army invades Hungary to crush the Hungarian Revolution.

1960 Protests erupt in Nowa Huta, the "model workers city" established outside Krakow, over the removal of a cross from a Church site. In June, Gomulka announces an economic speed-up and more investment in heavy industry.

1967 In June, Israel defeats the Soviet-backed armies of Egypt and Syria, as well as other Arab armies in the 6-Day War. The Soviet Union and other governments of the Warsaw Pact (except Romania) sever diplomatic relations with Israel. Interior Minister, General Mieczyslaw Moczar, a veteran of the communist underground in WWII, makes a play for power by launching an anti-Semitic campaign, purging Jews from public institutions by claiming that they are agents of Israel.

1968 In February, Polish students and professors organize a protest campaign over the banning of a play by Poland's national poet, Adam Mickiewicz. The play is banned because of references to Russian occupation. Student protests gain strength throughout Poland, and demands are made for full academic and intellectual freedom. The protests are crushed at Warsaw University, and student leaders are arrested and imprisoned. Gomulka, uses the student protests as an excuse to intensify the anti-Semitic campaign. Most of Poland's remaining 70,000 Jews are impelled to leave the country.

In August, General Wojciech Jaruzelski leads Polish troops in the Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

1970 In December, West German Chancellor Willy Brandt comes to Warsaw and signs an agreement that formally recognizes the new frontiers established after World War II.

Price increases are announced as part of an "economic reform," and strikes break out in coastal cities. In Gdansk, Polish armed forces fire on strikers at the Lenin Shipyards; according to some government reports, 300 people are killed. Independent reports place the figure much higher.

Gomulka is replaced by Edward Gierek as General Secretary of the Communist Party.

1971 Unrest continues, and on January 24 and 25, Gierek and several senior colleagues, including Minister of Defense Jaruzelski, meet with strikers in Szczecin and Gdansk. Promises of liberalization and reform are made to convince workers to end their strikes; they do.

In December, at the PZPR's 6th Party Congress, Gierek ignores his promises to the strikers. Instead, he announces a "rush towards industrialization," which will be financed in the 1970s by upwards of $20 billion in loans and credits from Western countries.

1976 In June, the government announces steep food price increases. Strikes break out in Radom and Ursus, and are put down by Polish security forces. However, the price increases are revoked. Strike leaders and other workers are fired. In response to the treatment of workers, a group of 14 intellectuals, active in the opposition, forms the Committee for the Defense of Workers (KOR).

1978 In October Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla is elected Pope; he takes the name John Paul II.

The Independent Trade Union of the Baltic Coast is formed.

1979 John Paul II visits Poland in June and is received by crowds of millions in Warsaw, Krakow and other cities.

1980 In July, faced with a new economic crisis, the government again raises food prices, sparking wildcat strikes in all parts of the country.

On August 13, the management of the Lenin shipyard tries to fire a crane operator, Anna Walentynowicz, for "strike agitation." The next day, assisted by KOR and Independent Trade Union activists, her co-workers organize a strike and call for her reinstatement. The shipyard is closed, and a strike committee formed, which organizes a series of demands. Lech Walesa climbs over the shipyard wall and becomes informal leader of the strike committee, representing 80,000 workers. Strikes break out throughout Poland, involving some 4 million workers. An inter-factory strike committee gathers at the Lenin shipyard and presents a list of 21 demands, including the right to form free trade unions, the abolition of censorship, the right to strike, and a memorial to those strikers killed in 1970. Gierek resigns.

On August 31, after two weeks of tense negotiations, the 21-point agreement is signed between the government and the strike committee. Lech Walesa announces that the strike has achieved its main goal: the right to form free trade unions.

Free trade unions are formed throughout the country, and they agree to the name, Independent and Self-Governing Trade Union, "Solidarity" (Solidarnosc), taken from the title of the strike bulletin at the Lenin shipyards. Within two months, over ten million workers join.

In November, after a nationwide strike alert, the Warsaw Supreme Court finally agrees to formally register Solidarity without a clause recognizing the leading role of the Communist Party (previously stated by the court to be necessary under Polish law).

In December the border between East Germany and Poland is closed by the Soviet Union. A Warsaw Pact summit is held in Moscow, igniting fears of an invasion.

A memorial to the Polish workers killed in the 1970 protests is unveiled in the Lenin shipyard.

Meat rationing is instituted.

1981 In February General Jaruzelski is appointed Prime Minister. He also retains his position as Defense Minister, held since 1968. Students strike at Lodz University and win the right to form an independent students union.

In March, Warsaw Pact maneuvers take place in Poland; for the first time, they are not headed by the host-country's defense minister and are conducted by Soviet Marshall Viktor Kulikov. On the 19th, three Rural Solidarity activists are beaten by police during the breakup of a sit-in in the town of Bydgoszcz; protest strikes break out in several cities. Solidarity calls for a nationwide strike on the 31st to demand full implementation of the August agreements; on the 30th an accord is reached with the government, and although it falls short of the union's demand, Lech Walesa calls off the strike.

Strikes continue throughout July and August to protest food shortages, widely believed to be the result of deliberate government policy.

In October, Jaruzelski assumes post of General Secretary of the communist party. A new wave of strikes breaks out. By October 22 strikes and strike threats have spread to 28 provinces. On November 4, after army units are deployed, Jaruzelski, Walesa and Jozef Glemp, the Primate of Poland, meet and agree on forming a committee to end the crisis. The Polish army pulls back troops deployed in October.

On December 2, the police break up a sit-in at the Warsaw Fire Cadets Academy organized by firefighters seeking to form a union.

In response to the growing threat of a crackdown, from December 11-12 Solidarity's national leadership discusses a new series of demands, including free national elections, access to the media, and joint union-party control of the economy. The union also calls for a referendum to be held on the future of the government if their demands are not met.

In the early morning hours of Sunday December 13, General Jaruzelski declares a "state of war," suspending all civil liberties, interrupting all communications, and instituting draconian measures against all independent organizations and activity. The Military Council for National Salvation [WRON] is formed to coordinate the "state of war," or martial law. On the 13th, Lech Walesa is taken into custody; throughout Poland, thousands of union leaders, students and intellectuals are rounded up and "interned" without charges. Strikes are crushed in all major Polish cities by the militarized police forces [ZOMO], resulting in at least 33 deaths. The Sejm formally announces the suspension of Solidarity and all other independent organizations formed in the previous sixteen months.

1982 By February, over 10,000 people are being held indefinitely without trial, and tens of thousands are being arrested and held for 48 hours.

In April, a Temporary Coordinating Commission of Solidarity is formed underground, made up of union leaders who have escaped arrest. A few union activists are to remain underground for several years, although most are eventually captured by the secret police. A network of clandestine union committees is formed and underground publications begin to appear. (There are over 700 by the end of the year.)

In May, 50,000 Poles march in Warsaw to protest martial law. In August, three people are killed in Lubin during three days of protest against martial law.

In October, a new labor law is adopted formally outlawing Solidarity and authorizing the creation of new, government-sanctioned unions. In protest, the U.S. suspends Poland's Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status, adding to the severe sanctions already adopted in response to martial law.

In November, Walesa is released without trial and returns to Gdansk.

1983 In July, "the state of war" is formally lifted, but many of its provisions have been permanently enacted into law. A limited amnesty is offered political offenders, and some are offered release on condition that they emigrate. They refuse.

Walesa wins the Nobel Peace Prize in October. In November, butter and margarine rationing is instituted.

1984 In June, Solidarity organizes a nationwide boycott of local elections, in which only candidates of the Communist Party and its allies appear on the ballot. Despite government intimidation, over 40% of the population boycotts the elections.

In July another amnesty is announced that leads to the release of 630 political prisoners and 35,000 common criminal offenders; at least several hundred political prisoners remain in jail. In addition, new arrests swell the prisons. The U.S. announces that sanctions will remain in place.

In October, Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a leading Catholic supporter of the banned Solidarity union, is murdered by members of the Polish security forces. International protests are made and protests and marches are held in Poland; over 250,000 mourners attend his funeral.

1985 In February four Polish security officers are sentenced for their role in the Popieluszko murder, but the trial leaves unclear how far up the chain of command the order was given. In March, Mikhail Gorbachev is appointed General Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

1986 In May, Zbigniew Bujak, an underground Solidarity leader and head of its Temporary Coordinating Commission, is arrested after four and a half years of successfully eluding police. In a June crackdown against Solidarity, police arrest thirty activists.

In September, the government releases most of Poland's remaining political prisoners and announces an amnesty for all those who leave the underground. Jaruzelski asks for conciliation as well as normalization of ties with the USA. In October the Polish government bans the Provisional Council of Solidarity which was established in an effort to start a dialogue with the government. In December, an economic austerity plan is imposed.

1988 In April, the first major strikes since 1982 are organized at the Nowa Huta steelworks, the Lenin shipyards and several other sites. They are crushed by ZOMO anti-riot police.

In August, new strikes erupt at the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk and throughout the Silesia coal mining district. As in April, the workers demand the restoration of Solidarity. Lech Walesa convinces the strikers to go back to work after receiving assurances from Prime Minister Rakowski and Interior Minister Kiszczak that the government will agree to roundtable negotiations with Solidarity.

1989 On February 6, after months of delay, the first roundtable meeting between the government and Solidarity takes place in Warsaw.

On April 5, a Roundtable Agreement is reached. It restores the legal status of Solidarity, and includes provisions to hold partially-free elections, with 35% of the seats in the Sejm, or parliament, and all 100 seats in a newly-created Senate (with minor powers) freely contested. The other 65% of the seats in the Sejm will be reserved for the Communist Party and its allies. On May 17, the Catholic Church is formally recognized as a "legal entity." On June 4 the first round of elections are held. Despite the fact that on the "state list" the Communist candidates run unopposed, all but two fail to win the minimum 50% of the vote necessary for election. All but one of Solidarity's candidates win in landslide victories. The "state list" is forced into a second round, in which only a plurality is necessary.

In July, Jaruzelski runs for the Parliamentary-elected office of President, an office with expanded powers under the Roundtable Agreement. He is elected by only one vote (a victory that is widely rumored to have been an under-the-table part of the Agreement), and then resigns as PZPR General Secretary. Solidarity's parliamentary representatives refuse to participate with the Communists in a coalition government. The previously submissive puppet parties allied with the Communists also refuse to cooperate with Jaruzelski, and in August the Communist candidate for Prime Minister fails in his efforts to form a government. Jaruzelski asks Walesa to propose a new candidate for Prime Minister.

Tadeusz Mazowiecki is chosen by the Solidarity caucus as their candidate, and on August 19, he is asked by Jaruzelski to form a government. On September 12, Mazowiecki and a new cabinet are approved by the Sejm; the Communists head only four ministries, although they manage to hold on to Interior and Defense. Of the 23 cabinet members, 11 are Solidarity members. It is the first non-communist-led government in Eastern Europe since 1948.

1990

In January, the Mazowiecki government institutes a fundamental economic reform package, which puts an end to state price controls and subsidies, and establishes open exchange of currency with the West. It is called the "Balcerowicz Plan" after the Minister of Finance. The reforms succeed in stabilizing hyperinflation, taking the inflation rate from 7,000% a year to less than 3% per month.

In the spring, Solidarity holds its Second National Congress, the first since October 1981. Membership, however, has declined from 10 million to 2.5 million members. Walesa is reelected chairman.

Walesa's calls for the withdrawal of Soviet troops is rejected by Mazowiecki and Jaruzelski. Citing possible land disputes with the Germans, they say that the Soviets should remain until the reunification of Germany is settled. The Communist Party dissolves itself, splits, and reorganizes under a new name, the Social Democratic Party. In April the Soviet government finally admits responsibility for the 1940 Katyn Forest massacre, a crime they had denied for 50 years.

On May 27, local elections are held for over 100,000 seats to city councils. Communists are defeated throughout the country and Solidarity candidates win a majority of seats.

Walesa calls for direct presidential elections to be held in the fall, and announces he will be a candidate. Walesa calls for "acceleration of reforms" by breaking the Roundtable Agreement, and criticizes Mazowiecki's government for being too slow. A split forms as Solidarity's political leaders begin to align themselves with either the Walesa or Mazowiecki positions. On July 6 Mazowiecki dismisses three ex-Communist ministers from the cabinet.

In September, the Sejm approves an electoral law for direct presidential elections. In October, six candidates gain enough signatures to be on the ballot, including both Walesa and Mazowiecki.

On November 14 Poland signs a treaty with a newly-united Germany which guarantees Poland's western border. On the 27th Poland holds presidential elections, the first free elections since 1925. Walesa gains 40% of the vote but Stanislaw Tyminski, a Polish expatriate, gains 23%, forcing a runoff. On December 9, Walesa wins the runoff with 74% of the vote.

1991 On February 25, the leaders of Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union sign a formal protocol dissolving the Warsaw Pact.

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VI. Suggested Discussion Questions

I. A Short History

The following article, "The People Versus the Party" by Polish journalist and scholar Leopold Unger, appeared in the Spring 1983 *Wilson Quarterly*. It offers an overview of post-WWII Polish history, and gives some insight into the character of the nation, its previous government and its people.

THE PEOPLE VERSUS THE PARTY

by Leopold Unger

What, Confucius was once asked, are the essentials of government? "First," the philosopher replied, "the people should not go hungry; second, the army should be powerful; and third, the government should enjoy the trust of the people." Which of these elements, the questioner continued, might be sacrificed in a pinch? "First," Confucius said, "I would do without the army; then I would sacrifice the people's food, since starvation and famine have existed since the dawn of mankind; but where there is no trust, common people will have nothing to stand on."

Confucius, of course, was unable to take into account 35 years of absolute Communist rule in Poland, where the Army is powerful, but shortages of food and trust persist. The people have "nothing to stand on," but the regime still endures. As far as Poland is concerned, it was not only Confucius who was wrong but also Stalin. In April 1945, he told Yugoslavia's Josip Broz Tito, "This war is not as in the past; whoever occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise." Thirty-eight years later, Soviet troops are still stationed in Poland, but Soviet ideas, though duly imposed, have yet to take hold.

What Poland's Communist masters failed to understand from the beginning is that Poland is a people before it is a state; it is the Polish people rather than the Polish state that has, over the years, lent coherence and continuity to the history of "Poland." For as a political entity, Poland's evolution has followed a

tortuous course, often dictated by outsiders. As anyone familiar with European history knows, Polish territory was long treated as a kind of modeler's clay, sculpted (and diminished) by powerful neighbors. My own parents, for example, were born and married in the city of Lwów and never moved from there; yet what was Poland when I was born had been part of Austria when they were young, and was controlled by Germany when they were killed. They were buried in an unmarked grave in the city of their birth, which is now within the Soviet Union.

Of course, politically if not physically, the rest of Poland today also lies within the Soviet Union, even though a "sovereign" state has been reconstituted and can be found on any map of Europe. The state in question is ruled by the leadership of the Polish United Workers' Party (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, or PZPR). The chief source of discord in Poland today, of spiritual discord in particular, is that the Polish Communist party is not and has never been Polish—not Polish, at any rate, in a sense that would be understood by most Poles.

Poland is no stranger to travail. Thrice during the late 18th century, her powerful neighbors—Russia, Prussia, and Austria—carved her up and feasted upon various portions. For more than 120 years after the Third Partition in 1795, Poland as such did not exist at all. Neither the Duchy of Warsaw (1807–15), established by Napoleon, nor the Congress Kingdom (1815–64), established by the Congress of Vienna (and dominated by the Russian Tsar), altered this fact. Nor did two ill-fated uprisings (in 1830–31 and 1863–64) or the revolutionary ferment of the Spring of Nations (in 1848–49). Nevertheless, the Polish people continued to insist, or at least to hope, that their dead state would one day be reborn. And from the ashes of World War I, so indeed it was.

Two groups in Poland, however, were adamantly opposed to the state's rebirth. The groups in question were Rosa Luxemburg's Social Democratic Party of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania, and the Polish Socialist Party Left (the left-wing faction of the Socialist Party). "The slogan of independent Poland," declared the socialist newspaper *Nasza Trybuna* on November 2, 1918, just days before independent Poland was established anew, "is the axis around which gather the powers of the social reactionaries." In the view of extreme leftists, economically depressed Poland was ripe for proletarian revolution. Creating a bourgeois state would only delay the inevitable; it would constitute, moreover, an obstacle to the triumphal march of communism from Russia to Germany. In December 1918, the Social Democrats and the Polish Socialist Left merged to form the

Communist Party of Poland.

The Polish Communists regarded the new Polish Republic as illegitimate: "the easternmost segment of Western imperialism." They refused to seek legal sanction for their new party—though it would have been forthcoming—and boycotted the January 1919 election of a Polish Parliament, the Sejm. Having failed to register, the party was declared illegal and forced underground, where it stayed until 1944–45.

Instinct for Self-Destruction

At odds with Lenin (who, ironically, recognized the potency of Polish nationalism), Luxemburg redirected her efforts towards Germany. Ethnic Poles then high up in the Soviet hierarchy—notably, Feliks Dzierżynski and Józef Unszlicht, creators and chiefs of the Cheka, Lenin's secret police and forerunner of the KGB—were able to exercise increasing sway over the Polish party. When the Polish-Soviet war broke out in 1920, the Polish Communists insisted that it was not a contest between two sovereign states but instead a struggle for socialist revolution. Calling unsuccessfully for a general strike, the party urged its members to sabotage the Polish war effort and work to aid Bolshevist Russia. General Józef Piłsudski's "miracle on the Vistula"—his stunning defeat of the Red Army in the battle of Warsaw—dashed Communist hopes.

From its very inception, then, the Communist Party of Poland found itself out of step with the desires of most Poles. "With you, gentlemen," Polish Socialist Party leader Mieczysław Niedziałkowski told the Communists in 1923, explaining his refusal to join them in a united front, "one never knows if you are genuine political workers or agents of the Russian government." The question continues to be asked.

Regardless of the integrity and courage that many of its activists displayed, the Polish Communist Party was permanently fixed in the role of the outcast. Few rallied to its banner. It is difficult in 1983 to evaluate the strength of an illegal and underground political party a half-century ago, but the most credible statistics indicate that out of a Polish population of some 20 million, the Communist Party could boast only 5,000 members in 1922; 15 years later, despite "favorable" economic and social conditions, it had fewer than 4,000.

And the party was caught in a trap: The more unpopular it became, the more it had to rely on the Soviet Union; the more it did that, the more unpopular it became. During modern Poland's first fling with parliamentary democracy (1918–26), and then during Piłsudski's military dictatorship (1926–35), the party proved unable to break out of this vicious cycle. And it manifested from the outset an instinct for self-destruction, as when, in 1932, at the Party Congress held in Belorussia, the Polish Communists openly commiserated with the German Communists on the "Polish occupation of Upper Silesia." Eventually, the Polish party became a creature of the Comintern, the Communist International. And after Stalin consolidated his power during the late 1920s, the Comintern served as little more than an instrument of the Russian government.

The internationalism of the Polish Communist Party was not enough to protect it from a dramatic end. Two blows removed it temporarily from history.

First, during the Great Purge of 1936–38, Stalin executed or

The First Partition, 1772: Poland's last King, Stanislaw-August Poniatowski, despairingly clutches his crown as Russia's Catherine the Great, Prussia's Frederick the Great, and Austria's Joseph II divide nearly one-third of the Kingdom of Poland among themselves.

Leopold Unger, 60, a Wilson Center Fellow, is a journalist and former editor of the Warsaw daily newspaper, Zycie Warszawy. *Since 1969, he has written a column that appears in* Le Soir *in Brussels, where he now lives. His work also appears in the* International Herald Tribune *in Paris and the Paris-based Polish monthly,* Kultura. *Born in Lwow, Poland, he received a degree in political economy from the Economics School of Bucharest in 1948 and a degree in philosophy from the Institute of Philosophy in Warsaw in 1964. He received the "Kultura Prize" in 1976.*

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MODERN POLAND

Source: U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, *Special Supplement to National Geographic*, April 1982

interned several hundred Polish Communists who happened to be on Soviet soil. Many Communists living abroad were lured back and executed. Of the 37 members of the Polish Communist Party's Central Committee elected in 1932, 30 perished, including the entire Politburo and Secretariat. (The few survivors, including Władysław Gomułka, a future First Secretary of the Polish party, owed their good fortune to the fact that, as members of an illegal organization, they were languishing in Polish prisons at the time.) Then, in 1938, on the pretext that the Polish party had been infiltrated by Polish police agents, Stalin dissolved it altogether.

There was, perhaps, a silver lining. Since it had ceased to exist, the Communist Party of Poland was spared the ignominy of having to endorse (as other Communist parties would do, after performing awkward ideological contortions) the Nazi-Soviet non-aggression pact signed on August 23, 1939. A week later, on September 1, came the German invasion of Poland—and World War II. The Polish Army, though it resisted valiantly, crumbled after a few weeks. The Red Army's attack from the east, launched on September 17, sealed the country's fate. By late September, Hitler and Stalin had split the conquered nation between themselves, like the partitioning powers of yore.

The "Fourth Partition" was roughly along the Bug and San rivers. Germany took more than half of Poland and most (22 million) of its people. Part of the German conquest was formally incorporated into the Reich; the rest was treated as, in Hitler's words, a "vast Polish labor camp." All Jews and most educated Poles were marked for extermination. The concentration camps at Auschwitz, Treblinka, Majdanek and elsewhere were in operation by 1942.

The Poles in the Soviet-occupied sector of their country hardly fared better. Several hundred thousand were deported and imprisoned in distant parts of the Soviet Union. Many others were killed. Most of the 15,000 Polish officers taken by the Soviets as prisoners of war disappeared. Stalin's foreign minister, Vyacheslav M. Molotov, boasted in October 1939: "Nothing is left of Poland, this ugly offspring of the Versailles Treaty."

But, already, the Polish resistance had begun. A government-in-exile was formed in Paris, with General Władysław Sikorski, politically a man of the democratic center, as Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief. Representatives of the Socialist, Peasant, and National parties were included in the government, which fled to London after the fall of France in June 1940. In Poland itself, the underground Armia Krajowa (Home Army) resisted the German occupation.

Looking Ahead

After Operation Barbarossa—the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941—Moscow changed its tune. The "imperialist" war fomented by the British and French "warmongers" now became the "Great Patriotic War," and Britain and France became valiant allies. By the end of July, the Polish government-in-exile, under strong British pressure, uneasily reached an agreement with the Kremlin. The Soviets renounced the 1939 partition and gave "amnesty" to their Polish prisoners, allowing them to form a Polish Army, which fought in Africa and Italy.

Looking ahead, Stalin realized that a Polish Communist party would again be useful. He also recognized that his de facto (if short-lived) alliance with Hitler and his participation in the dismemberment of Poland—not to mention the old Polish party's extreme unpopularity—made it inadvisable to use the word "communist" in the new party's name. And so in the beginning of 1942, the Polish Workers' Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza, or PPR) and its military arm, the Armia Ludowa (People's Army), came into existence. The new group's Moscow-trained leaders—

notably Marceli Nowotko and Pawel Finder—were parachuted into German-occupied Poland to direct the underground movement. Of course, the Soviets remained uneasy about Polish Communists, particularly when operating beyond Moscow's physical reach. It is not surprising that both Nowotko and Finder soon met violent deaths—at the hands of comrades—under circumstances that have never been officially explained.

Stalin maintained his alliance with Sikorski's government only as long as necessary. After the Russian victory over the Germans at Stalingrad in early 1943, Stalin rejected Polish claims to prewar Poland's eastern territory. When the Germans in April announced discovery of the Katyn massacre—they had unearthed a mass grave containing the bodies of 4,250 Polish officers slain by the Russians in the Katyn forest near Smolensk—Stalin used the request of the government in London for a Red Cross investigation as an excuse to break off relations. In July 1943, Sikorski died in an air crash, and Stanisław Mikołajczyk, a leader of the Peasant Party, became Prime Minister.

As the Red Army in the spring and early summer of 1944 neared the Moscow-recognized boundary with Poland (roughly the so-called Curzon Line, suggested by British Foreign Secretary Lord Curzon in 1919), the Soviets began molding a subservient Polish "government," using underground PPR members but with trusted Poles from Moscow brought in to run the show: Bolesław Bierut, for example, a Comintern official, along with representatives of the Moscow-based and Kremlin-controlled Union of Polish Patriots.

Caesar's Wife's Sins

Local Polish Home Army forces, as directed by the London government-in-exile, helped the Red Army's advance. But in most cases, once the Germans had sufficiently retreated, the Polish officers were arrested and their men impressed into the Soviet-commanded Polish Army. The liberated areas came under the control of the communist government installed in Lublin. In July, the Red Army neared the outskirts of Warsaw. On August 1, the Poles in the old capital rose up against the German occupiers—but Stalin's legions just across the Wisła (Vistula) River did not come to their assistance. The Warsaw Uprising, thus doomed, nevertheless lasted 63 days. Neither the uprising, nor its 150,000 victims, nor its lesson, would be forgotten.

By the time the "Big Three" met at Yalta in February 1945, the Lublin government was firmly entrenched in Warsaw. Winston Churchill and Franklin Roosevelt were convinced that they

The Strike *(1910). Stanisław Lentz completed this painting five years after Polish workers, in a nationwide general strike, sought a shorter workday and a democratic republic. The desire for both "bread and freedom" persists.*

could do little, short of war with the Soviets, to change that reality. They went along with Stalin's designs for Poland, recognizing the Curzon Line as Poland's eastern boundary and thereby placing the cities of Wilno (Vilnius) and Lwów (L'vov), centers of Polish culture for centuries, inside the Soviet Union. (The Allies agreed to compensate Poland by making extensive annexations to the west at Germany's expense.) In addition, the communist government, rather than the London government-in-exile, was accepted by the Allied leaders as the nucleus of the future Polish regime, although, in an empty concession, Stalin promised to "reorganize" the Lublin government to include some "democratic leaders." Stalin promised, too, that "free and unfettered" elections would be held. They would be, like Caesar's wife, above suspicion. "I did not know Caesar's wife," Roosevelt told Stalin, "but she was believed to have been pure." Replied Stalin: "I was told so about Caesar's wife, but in fact she had certain sins."

The Western leaders' hopes were in vain. The postwar period of "dualism"—when the PPR, although effectively dominating the provisional government, kept a low profile, and when substantial personal freedom still existed in Poland—did not last very long. When elections were finally held in January 1947, they were not like Caesar's wife. Had they been, Mikołajczyk's

Peasant Party, supported by most noncommunist forces in Poland, unquestionably would have won the largest number of seats in the Sejm. But thanks to terror and fraud—including mass arrests and raids on Mikołajczyk's headquarters throughout the country, as well as legal measures that struck his party's name from the ballot in about one-fifth of the election districts—the Peasant Party garnered only 28 seats out of 444.

Not surprisingly, the PPR and its Socialist and other allies in the "Democratic Bloc" emerged the winners. Before the year was out, Mikołajczyk himself, fearing that a price had been put on his head, fled to the West. In December 1948, the Polish Communists erased the last source of potential political opposition by effectively eliminating the Socialist Party—absorbing it into the PPR to form the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). At the Unification Congress in Warsaw, members of the assembly chanted over and over again: "Sta-lin, Sta-lin, Sta-lin." Poland as a state entered a new era. Poland as a people balked.

No 'Polish Way'

Over Poland, as over the rest of Eastern Europe, night descended. The Communist parties everywhere did their utmost to interrupt institutional continuity, erode popular morale, and erase the memory of national history. Relying on force, corruption, blackmail, harassment, and sheer exhaustion, the Communists sought submission if not energetic support. Those in the parties' ranks who expressed misgivings about following Moscow's lead or adopting its economic model or embracing its ideas about cultural policy were accused of "nationalist deviation" and purged. In Poland, Władysław Gomułka, who had often spoken of the need to take "the Polish way to Socialism," did not hold his party post as General Secretary for long. He was, in fact, arrested and imprisoned for three years. Stalin's man Bierut took his place.

Outwardly, events in Poland resembled those taking place in its Eastern European neighbors. The Poles first heard of their refusal to accept Marshall Plan aid on Radio Moscow, just as Czech Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk learned of his nation's rejection from Stalin himself. Poland's leaders, like the leaders of other Eastern European states, paid obeisance to Cominform, the Communist Information Bureau, Comintern's successor. But, inwardly, the Polish situation was different. The Polish Communist party never managed to subdue the populace. Indeed, it has never ceased capitulating to the people whom it wanted to rule unconditionally. Four times in 25 years—in 1956,

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1970, 1976, and 1980—it faced a national revolt, and each time, whether armed force was employed or not, it was compelled to give in.

The history of the rest of Eastern Europe has not, of course, been uneventful. Albania, Romania, and Yugoslavia did, to various extents, break with Moscow, but the power of each nation's ruling Communist party was never effectively challenged. The Hungarian revolt in 1956 and the Czechoslovakian "spring" in 1968 both prompted Soviet intervention, but that was followed in each case by a quick return to normal (which meant that rulers and ruled led parallel lives in an atmosphere, insofar as possible, of mutual indifference).

Rejecting the Graft

But in Poland, there has never been a return to "normal." The perverse cycle is by now familiar. It begins with the mismanaged economy functioning more eccentrically than usual. Then comes a spark, in the form of some ill-considered government decision (e.g., abruptly raising the price of basic foods). The resulting explosion fragments the party apparatus. Attempts to contain the conflagration, usually by force (54 people were killed at Poznań in 1956, more than 100 at Gdańsk in 1970), merely cause it to spread. Finally the party resorts to radical surgery, sacrificing its top leadership, promising reform, and finally, when all is calm, sliding back into its old rut.

Clearly, then, a question needs to be asked: What makes Poland so different? Why has the communist "graft" been repeatedly rejected as it has not been elsewhere in the Eastern Bloc?

The most fundamental reason, as I proposed above, is that the Polish Communist party has historically been unable to comprehend the nature of the Polish nation or to accept that the nation's basic characteristics are, indeed, basic, unalterable, inherent. With 30 million people in 1945 and a land area of 120,700 square miles, Poland was the largest country to come under Soviet sway. It could boast a cultural coherence unrivaled in Eastern Europe. Its people spoke a single language, and its key institutions—the Parliament, the universities, the church, the trade unions—had long histories: decades in the case of unions, centuries in the case of the Parliament, a millennium in the case of the church. To succeed in Sovietizing Poland, the Communist regime had to root out and overcome these impediments. It had, in short, to overcome Poland itself.

Nor, from the Communist point of view, were the circumstances after 1945 ideal. Poland had suffered greatly as a result

of World War II. It had lost one-sixth of its population—six million people, including three million Jews—and endured the nightmare of Nazi and Soviet occupation. But Poland had also greatly contributed to Allied victory. Poles fought at Arnheim and Monte Cassino and Lenino and, altogether, constituted the fourth largest Allied armed force, surpassed only by those of the Soviet Union, the United States, and Great Britain. At war's end, the Poles who survived felt far more acutely than did the Czechs or Austrians or Hungarians that they had earned a right, ratified in blood, to shape their own destiny. The prospect of slipping permanently into a Soviet "sphere of influence" was abhorrent. It had been only a few years, after all, since the Russians had participated in Poland's partition, brutally thinned its population, and cavalierly murdered a generation of its military officers. Even before all this, the Russians had not been regarded by the Poles with bonhomie.

It was inevitable, then, that attempts by the Polish regime to Sovietize the country and siphon away its character would at best antagonize and at worst antagonize and fail. But the Communist leaders had no choice but to push ahead. They were, themselves, being pushed.

Against the Grain

The regime promptly abolished the respected position of President of the Republic and in 1952 gave Poland a new socialist constitution that hollowly saluted "the fraternal bond with the USSR." National Constitution Day (May 3), the anniversary of the adoption of Poland's 1791 Constitution, the earliest democratic charter in Europe, was eliminated. The PZPR also proposed changing the Polish national anthem, Józef Wybicki's "Mazurka," which dated back to the period of the partitions. Even Stalin thought that was going too far and overruled it.

The success of such tactics is perhaps best judged by the fact that in 1981, taking advantage of the relative freedom of the 16-month Solidarity period, throngs of young people spontaneously celebrated the old "national day" of May 3, whose significance is not something learned in Polish schools. As we shall see, the events of the Solidarity period provided a window into a Polish consciousness unadulterated by the regime.

The Polish Army had always been irrationally precious in Polish eyes. The Warsaw government overlooked that. The Home Army, whose performance against the Nazis was a source of vast pride to all Poles, was reviled on posters as the "spit-souled dwarf of the reactionaries." Polish citizenship was taken

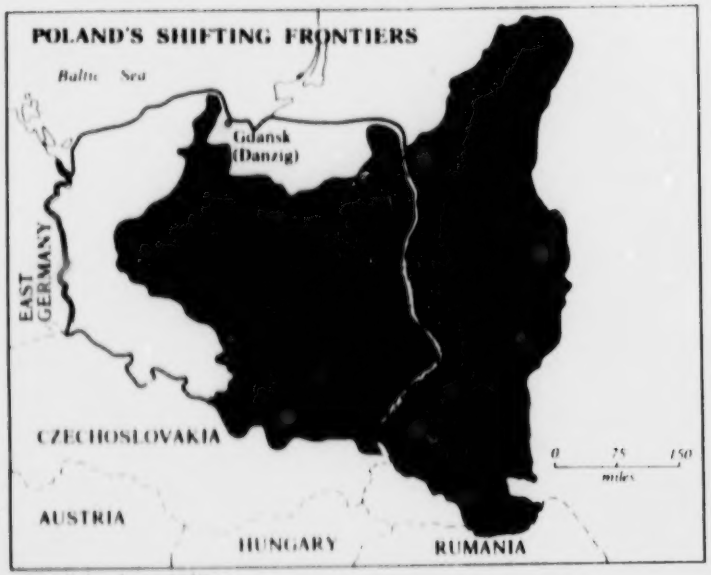
away from those who had commanded Polish forces in the West, and several high-ranking officers were condemned to death upon their return to Poland. The oath of allegiance was altered so that Polish soldiers swore loyalty not just to Poland but also to the Soviet Union. The regime accepted a Soviet Marshal, Konstanty Rokossowski, as Commander-in-Chief of the Polish Army, Minister of Defense, and member of the Politburo. (On his new Polish uniform, Rokossowski wore the prestigious Virtuti Militari medal, pinning it, however, on the wrong side of his breast.) Soviet officers of Polish extraction were brought in to man sensitive posts, and a Soviet general, Seraphim Lalin, was put in control of Poland's secret police.

Politicized Learning

It is worth noting that workers in Warsaw in 1980 named a bridge after General Stefan Grot-Rowecki, the Home Army Commander, and proposed turning the home of Marshal Jozef Piłsudski in nearby Sulejówek into a national museum. The names of these generals do not reverently cross Polish teachers' lips. A year later, in August 1981, a heavy cement monument appeared at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw. It consisted of a cross and a tombstone on which had been engraved a simple but resonant message: "Katyn—1940." The next morning, the monument had disappeared. Significantly, the Polish people had built the monument in broad daylight; the government had to remove it in the dead of night. Needless to say, Katyn as a Soviet atrocity is not in the textbooks either.

Nor is the best of Polish literature, past and present. Literature has long been Poland's conscience, but the regime from the outset tried to impose its own standards of style (a crude socialist realism) and, above all, of content while suppressing traditional classics along with the work of contemporary Polish writers. Polish censors (who would have found themselves aptly described by Orwell and Kafka, had their books been available in postwar Poland) spent their days compiling blacklists of books, movies, and plays. In 1968, the Polish authorities even removed *Dziady* ("Forefather's Eve"), by Adam Mickiewicz, from the Warsaw stage. *Dziady*, the most patriotic play in all of Polish literature, with the status of a national epic, was written in the 19th century when Warsaw was under Tsarist occupation. The regime felt obliged to shut the performance down, so up-to-date and anti-Soviet did it sound.

The effect of censorship was not, however, the end of Polish literature so much as the end of Polish literature published le-



Source: M. K. Dziewanowski, *Poland in the Twentieth Century*, 1977. Konrad Syrop, *Poland Between the Hammer and the Anvil*, 1968

To compensate for the postwar loss of its eastern half (mostly poor farmland) to the USSR, Poland won from Germany important industrial and coal-producing areas, including Upper Silesia, as well as greater access to the sea.

gally in Poland. The truly creative artists such as novelist Witold Gombrowicz and playwright Sławomir Mrożek continued to publish their work abroad. Inevitably, it filtered back and circulated widely in Poland. The regime, of course, has attempted to slay by silence the activities of Kultura, the émigré monthly and publishing house in Paris that has helped to keep alive everything the Warsaw government hoped to annihilate. Scores of Polish writers working in the West—including Czesław Miłosz, author of the powerful anticommunist critique, *The Captive Mind*—do not, as writers, officially exist. Yet when Miłosz was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1980, the Polish people expressed such pride in the work of this man of whom they were not supposed to have heard that the regime was forced to allow

him a triumphal visit to his native land. Poland's best writers were among the founders, in 1976, of KOR (the Committee of Workers' Defense), which helped provide the intellectual foundation of the free trade-union movement.

Independent learning, like the creative impulse, was an early target of the Communist government. For 500 years, Polish intellectuals had been at the forefront of European thinking. The University of Kraków, founded in 1364, is one of central Europe's oldest. But in 1951, the regime replaced the venerable Polish Academy of Knowledge with a crude, Soviet-style Academy of Sciences. The government politicized learning and flooded the universities with a vulgar Stalinist Marxism. A number of university posts went to party hacks, and party leaders, infused with a new snobbism, obliged universities to provide them with academic degrees of dubious merit.

Fighting for Souls

The corruption of the university, however, was far from total. Much of the professoriat maintained its integrity. In 1968–69, the regime was obliged to purge hundreds of eminent academics from their posts, including the economist Włodzimierz Brus and philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. Scholars continued nevertheless to agitate for liberalization in Poland. Their efforts supplemented those of the literary men who founded the KOR. Scholars from almost every conceivable field were instrumental in creating the "Flying University" which organized lectures around the country that would never have been permitted in the regular university seminar room—a recapitulation of the Warsaw Uprising, for example, or a revisionist assessment of contemporary Polish history, or a critique of the regime's economic policy, or a cold look at Poland's relations with the USSR. The durability of intellectual life in Poland is perhaps best attested to by the number of scholars the regime sees fit to expel year after year.

Of all the institutions the Warsaw government attempted to suborn, the most important was the Catholic Church. The church has long served as the main and practically invulnerable stronghold of the Polish national identity. Conservative, traditional, and often intolerant, the church nevertheless had always been *Polish*, a quality of particular importance during periods of war or occupation. The Communist apparatus lost no other battle more decisively than it did its contest with the church for the soul of the Poles.

The Communists' original sin, so to speak, was the creation

in 1949 of the association PAX, a lay organization designed to "liberate" the populace from the church hierarchy. Under the leadership of Bolesław Piasecki (the prewar chief of Falanga, a Polish fascist organization), PAX expanded quickly, providing the government with an unpersuasive alibi whenever the regime wished to defy the official church hierarchy. PAX was at the Communists' side when they shut down important Catholic publications like *Tygodnik Powszechny;* it helped organize the "patriot-priest" movement; and it assisted the government in its anti-Semitic campaign of the late 1960s.

'Revolutionary Vigilance'

It must be granted that the regime tried its best to humble the church. It put Bishop Czesław Kaczmarek on trial in 1953, accusing him of "spying for the CIA," arrested nine other bishops that year for sedition, and "isolated"—confining him to a convent—Poland's Primate, Stefan Cardinal Wyszynski. Party leader Bierut and others personally went to Moscow to coordinate an indictment against the Primate, and it was only at Moscow's insistence that the Warsaw government did not actually put Wyszynski on trial. Meanwhile, the regime pressed a Soviet-style propaganda campaign, banning religion from the schools, taking steps to curb the training of priests, and creating museums, associations, and publications devoted to atheism. If only on cultural grounds, such actions were a slap in the face of the Polish people.

The results of the regime's campaign against the church, predictably, were abysmal. Ostracized by local congregations, the patriot-priest movement fizzled. Catholic publications continued to appear underground and eventually were given official sanction. And after the workers' upheaval at Poznan in 1956, the new First Secretary, Gomułka, freed Cardinal Wyszynski as a sop to public opinion. Since then, the first act of every new First Secretary has been to meet publicly with Poland's Primate—as if to ask permission to form a government.

The election of Karol Cardinal Wojtyła, Archbishop of Krakow, to the papacy in 1978 further fortified Poland's church. Pope John Paul II's 1979 visit to his homeland may have marked a turning point in the country's modern history by giving millions of Poles for the first time a sense of their own power. One year later, in August 1980, Solidarity was born. The relative position of the church and the regime in Poland was nicely summed up by a Polish cartoon that appeared in 1979. It shows the Pope celebrating mass in Warsaw's Victory Square, looking

over a sea of heads. A party boss, standing behind the altar, points to the crowd of believers and orders a policemen: "Take down their names."

Unable to come to terms with the nation it had to govern, the Polish Communist party could wield power only by the continual reinforcement of "revolutionary vigilance"—the reinforcement, that is, of the apparatus of repression.

The party has never been monolithic. Its leadership, consisting not of ideologues but of adept individuals driven by the exercise of power, has remained distinct from its base, consisting of petty opportunists and even a few idealists. Over the years, the base of the party, periodically decimated by purges directed from on high, has proved to be anything but stable. Between 1959 and 1970, some 500,000 party members were expelled for "ideological apathy," 82 percent of them workers and peasants. It was a deliberate "de-proletarianization" of the party. The intellectuals came next, 8,000 of them, tainted by "revisionism," expelled in 1968. Who remained? The apparatus, the *nomenklatura*. Yet even the *nomenklatura* was not immune to factional infighting. During the 1940s, the "Soviets" were pitted against the "nationalists"; during the 1950s, the "dogmatists" against the "revisionists"; during the 1960s, the "veterans" against the "zionists"; and during the 1970s, the "technocrats" against the "regionalists."

Stalin Was Right

Blinded by their internecine disputes, and more interested in retaining their hold on the instruments of power than in employing them effectively, the leadership of the Communist party always studiously ignored the danger signals.

A year after taking power, in 1956, Gomułka crippled the economic advisory council when Oskar Lange and Michael Kalecki were devising workable solutions to Poland's economic crisis. In 1965, Jacek Kuron and Karol Modzelewski went to prison for their "Open Letter to the Party," which criticized the regime's stifling bureaucratization. During the 1970s, Edward Gierek, surrounded by his technocrats, spurned the four reports of the "experience and future" group, which warned of imminent social and economic chaos. Deaf to all alarms, the party leaders knew nothing of the mess they had created until the wave of strikes along the coast in 1980. By then it was too late.

The extent of the isolation of Poland's leaders from the rest of the Polish people is hard to overstate. In 1965, Gomułka speaking on TV to a nation beset by shortages of food, clothing

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and consumer goods, scoffed at the notion that women could not find tights to buy because "my wife just bought some" (at a state store for the elite). Gierek, according to an official party report, did not learn until 1978 of the massive increase of the Polish debt that had been building for years. Living in a small world of their own creation, the party leaders fought among themselves, jockeyed for influence, and by all accounts lined their pockets. After Gierek's fall from power in 1980, an official investigation showed that he, along with two Prime Ministers, seven Vice-Prime Ministers, 18 Ministers, and scores of Vice-Ministers, had used government money to build private villas for themselves.

Deep down, I suspect, Polish party leaders perceived the hollowness of their enterprise. The cynicism of Prime Minister Józef Cyrankiewicz was legendary. Jan Pietrzak, for many years the manager of a satirical theater in Warsaw, once told him that they both had made a career out of running funny institutions. Cyrankiewicz replied, "Yes, but you have better results." Conscious of the lack of trust, party leaders have periodically sought empty legitimation in elections that they control. But what comfort, really, can they take from a pro forma 99 percent approval at the polls compared to the unofficial plebiscites represented by the strikes in 1970 and 1980, or by the welcome accorded the pope on his visit in 1979?

In the end, the party leaders had to resort to threats, as Gierek did in 1980 when he spoke of "the anxiety of our Soviet comrades." And when threats failed, there was only force.

By December 1981, after more than a year of social, political, and cultural ferment made possible by the emergence of Solidarity, the Communist party had nothing else to fall back on. A military man, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, had been Prime Minister since February, First Secretary since October. On the night of December 13, he became chairman of the Wron, the military council of national salvation. Martial law was declared. Bertolt Brecht, who knew the system well, once said that when a communist government lost the confidence of its people, it was the people who had to be dismissed. But in Poland, that was not possible; it had been tried and had never worked. Ultimately, the Army dismissed the party.

The events of the past 35 years make one conclusion inescapable. In August 1944, Joseph Stalin received Stanisław Mikołajczyk, the Polish Prime Minister, in the Kremlin. Responding to Mikołajczyk's doubts as to the future of democracy in Poland, Stalin said: "Communism does not fit the Poles. They are too individualistic, too nationalistic. . . ."

This time, Stalin was right.

II. The Rise Of Solidarity

In August 1980, workers occupied the Lenin shipyard in Gdansk and won the right to form independent trade unions -- a freedom unprecedented in the history of the Soviet bloc. For the next sixteen months, the Solidarity trade union led a peaceful revolution in the shadow of Soviet tanks. Workers, students and intellectuals were united in purpose and action. Out of a population of 38 million, 10 million Poles were active members and millions more were active sympathizers. The organization was led by an elected national commission and had chapters in every region of the country for virtually every occupation. Solidarity's message was spread by word of mouth, and then by an explosion of do-it-yourself free press houses: at its height, the 150 publishing houses associated with Solidarity produced more than 2,000 journals and other periodicals.

These excerpts from *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity* by Timothy Garton Ash and *Heart of Europe: A Short History* by Norman Davies tell of the individuals and events that launched Solidarity onto the world stage. Despite the declaration of martial law on December 13, 1981 and the ensuing years of harassment and repression, those few months of Solidarity's success were to be a revelation to all of Eastern Europe and, ten years later, would prove to be the catalyst for the dissolution of the Soviet bloc.

The Polish Revolution

Like other revolutions, the Polish revolution of 1980-1 was not caused simply by growing economic "immiseration" and exploitation. The Gierek era is a perfect illustration of Tocqueville's famous observation that revolutions tend to happen not when things have been getting worse but when things have been getting better. The Gierek regime raised the material expectations of the population, and especially of the younger generation, to a level it could only disappoint. The curve of rising expectations, sharply disappointed, is a classic precondition for revolution. Its half-hearted tolerance of the opposition encouraged the growing conviction that people could change things by organizing themselves outside and against the totalitarian Party-state. This opposition saw a remarkable convergence of widely differing intellectual traditions and interest groups, of workers, intellectuals, and the Church, in defence of common, basic rights -- a convergence which was the conscious labor of outstanding individuals. Helped by the intellectual opposition, small groups of workers learned, from their own experience of protest in 1956, 1970 and 1976, to become (in Lenin's word) the "vanguard" of the revolution....

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In October 1978 there occurred a shocking external intervention in the internal affairs of People's Poland. Cardinal Karol Wojtyla, Archbishop of Krakow, was elected Pope. The nation celebrated this "miracle," spontaneously, in churches and on the streets: the regime was dismayed, though Gierek's Politburo put a brave face on things, and welcomed the elevation of a "son of the Polish nation." In June 1979, after some diplomatic wrangling, the Pope returned to his native land for the most fantastic pilgrimage in the history of contemporary Europe. As he progressed across the country, addressing hundreds of thousands in Warsaw's Victory Square, in Gniezno, the cradle of Polish Catholicism, before the shrine of the Black Madonna at Czestochowa, inside Auschwitz, and then, climatically, a vast congregation on the meadows of his beloved Krakow, he expounded his personal vision under the blazing sun.

In a beautiful, sonorous Polish, so unlike the calcified official language of communist Poland, he spoke of the "Fruitful synthesis" between love of country and love of Christ. At Auschwitz he gave his compatriots a further lesson in the meaning of patriotism, recalling, with reverence, the wartime sacrifice of the Jews and Russians, two peoples who few Poles had learned to love. He spoke of the "inalienable rights of man, the inalienable rights of dignity." He spoke of the special mission of the Slav Pope to reassert the spiritual unity of Christian Europe, east and west, across all political frontiers.... "The future of Poland," he declared from the pulpit of his old cathedral, "will depend on how many people are mature enough to be non-conformists."

This language, this vision, came like a revelation to countless young Poles. In Victory Square the crowd interrupted his sermon with a rhythmic chant, "We want God, we want God, we want God in the family circle, we want God in books, we want God in books, in schools, we want God in government orders, we want God, we want God..."

"People are preaching with me," the Pope said: and indeed this preaching built magnificently on the groundplan on the young generation's common but unarticulated values. "Yes," they said, as they walked homeward through flower-strewn streets, "now I see -- that *is* what I believe."

As important as this triumphant articulation of shared values was the popular experience of -- there is no better word for it -- solidarity. The police disappeared from the streets; perfect order was kept by volunteer ushers wearing the papal insignia. Despite the great heat and crush the vast crowds never once became violent. The drunks disappeared too: a voluntary ban on alcohol was generally observed.... Nearly two million people stood together, applauded together, sung their old hymns together, listened silently together. That intense unity of thought and feeling which previously had been confined to small circles of friends -- the intimate solidarity of private life in eastern Europe -- was now multiplied by millions. For nine days, the state virtually ceased to exist, except as a censor doctoring the television coverage. Everyone saw that Poland was not a communist country -- just a communist state.... From this time forward, the ... dichotomy between "society" and "power" became more than an intellectual construct....

There is no doubt the communist "power" was heading for a crisis anyway.... [The economy was in decline and] another attempt to increase food prices was almost certainly going to produce [an] explosion of working-class protest....

In December 1979 the Committee of Free Trade Unions on the Coast arranged an unofficial ceremony before the gates of the Lenin Shipyard to mark the anniversary of the 1970 shootings, as they had done the previous year. (They were helped by

student activists from the opposition Young Poland Movement....) Although most of the Free Trade Union activists were placed under preventative arrest, and despite a massive police presence, more than 5,000 people gathered at the appointed time. After the national anthem and the laying of wreaths, a student spoke on behalf of the arrested unionists:

"The history of the Polish People's Republic does not consist only of Party conferences and 5-year plans... We have to remember the Stalin terror, the June [1956] events in Poznan, the students' March [1968], December [1970] on the coast, June [1976] in Radom and Ursus. That is the history of our nation... Today, having learned from our experiences, we know how to struggle with calm, obstinacy and solidarity...."

After a minute's silence, a short, square-shouldered man with drooping moustaches erupted on the scene. Lech Walesa has secretly made his way to the gate, evading arrest. Introducing himself as a strike leader from 1970, but also as one who had [believed the promises of] Edward Gierek, he said that not one of the strikers' demands had been fulfilled, least of all a monument to the December martyrs. In vain they had put their trust in the Party. Now they knew that "only an organized and independent society can make itself heard. Therefore, I appeal to you to organize yourselves in independent groups for self-defence. Help each other." ...

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[In July 1980, the government proceeded with a planned price hike on foodstuffs. Sporadic work stoppages and strikes broke out across the country, as workers demanded compensatory wage increases -- one hundred and fifty in all by August 8. But not until August 14, did the nationwide unrest coalesce around the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk.]

[Worker activists] had been pessimistic about the chances of a strike taking off at all in the Lenin yard. In July they had tried and failed to organize a strike against the price rises. But by early August there was an example of successful strikes elsewhere, and the special case of Anna Walentynowicz. "Pani Ania" (Mrs. Ania), as the shipyard workers all affectionately called her, was a stout, ruddy lady in her early fifties who had worked for thirty years in the Lenin. She was probably the most popular member of the Free Trade Unions group. On 9 August she was [fired] -- the latest in a series of reprisals which began, typically, with her collecting candle stubs from a nearby graveyard to make new candles for the anniversary of December 1970. (The police accused her of stealing!) A demand for her reinstatement was bound to win support. So the Free Unions group decided to try again.

Before dawn on Thursday 14 August, three young workers ... smuggled posters by the Young Poland Movement past the noses of half-awake security guards. By half-past five they had gathered small groups around their posters, which demanded the reinstatement of Anna Walentynowicz and a thousand zloty compensatory pay rise. By six, when the first shift had clocked in, they set off from the locker-rooms on a long march through the vast yard, bearing banners and shouting to their mates to join them. Men put aside their blowtorches and clambered down from the sheer sides of half-finished ships. Soon they numbered more than a hundred, but they were still dwarfed by the huge cranes which straddle the yards like giant grasshoppers.

When they reached the main gate -- Gate No.2 -- part of the crowd wanted to carry on through the gate and out on to the streets, as they had in 1970. "You know what happened in front of this gate in 1970!" the young leaders cried, and just managed to halt the surge forward by proposing a minute's silence in memory of the December martyrs, and then singing the national anthem. Next they set about forming a strike committee. They were interrupted, however, by the Director of the whole shipyard, Klemens Gniech, a vigorous and not unpopular man, whose presence and authority shook them. When he clambered up on an excavator and promised negotiations, on condition that the strikers first went back to work, the crowd began to waver.

At this crucial moment a small, square-shouldered man with a large mustache scrambled up on the excavator behind Gniech. He tapped the Director on the shoulder. "Remember me?" he said, "I worked here for ten years, and I still feel I'm a shipyard worker. I have the confidence of the workers here. It's four years since I lost my job..." The feisty little electrician was still a popular figure around the yards -- many remembered his speech on the previous December -- and the crowd roared its approval when he declared an occupation-strike. [Lech] Walesa had arranged with [the other strike organizers] to come into the yard about six o'clock. [When this proved impossible, he waited and scaled the] twelve-foot-high perimeter wall, possibly sav[ing] the strike from collapse.

Under his leadership, a strike committee was soon formed, with delegates from most departments of the yard. At the strikers' insistence, the Director's car was dispatched for Pani Ania, and she was brought back in a gleaming, chauffeur-driven limousine, to resounding applause. Negotiations then got under way in the yard's "Health and Safety" center,

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where Walesa faced the Director across one of the long tables in the low, neon-lit assembly hall, between a model schooner (of the kind usually seen in yacht clubs) at one end and a statue of Lenin at the other. On the table was a microphone connected to the works radio, so that all negotiations would be broadcast across the yard... The strikers insisted on this democratic principle.

By now they had five main demands: the reinstatement of Anna Walentynowicz *and* Lech Walesa; a two thousand zloty pay rise; family allowances on a par with those of the police (believed to be much higher); security from reprisals for the strikers; and most remarkable of all, a monument to the victims of December 1970. On this last point the workers would not be moved. Gniech explained that the area in front of the main gate was designed for a new works hospital, a new supermarket, and a parking lot... The strikers preferred a monument. The management offered a commemorative plaque in the yard's so-called "Tradition Room..." The strikers demanded a monument. One of them exploded:

"We are haggling here over the dead heroes like blind beggars under a lamp post. You're talking about planning problems... people have been waiting for a monument to fifteen thousand Polish soldiers murdered by the Soviet government in Katyn [forest] thirty years... I beg your pardon, forty years ago. How much longer...?"

Another seized the microphone and appealed directly to the workers outside: did *they* want a monument?

A huge, sustained cheer rolled in through the windows. Gniech retreated for consultations.

In the late afternoon he returned with news that permission for the monument had been given, in principle, by the "highest authorities"....

If the authorities thought this bold concession would defuse the strike they were soon proved very wrong. For Walesa it was an incredible victory, and with a new self-confidence he shouted into the microphone that the strike would go on until all the demands were met -- and while they were about it, they had better talk about new tarde unions too... Instead of going home, appeased, several thousand strikers settled down for the first of many nights they would spend inside the yard (some had already brought in a spare pair of overalls). Pickets were posted on all the gates, and guards at regular intervals around the perimeter wall.

The Polish Revolution: Solidarity
Timothy Garton Ash

Solidarnosc

In mid-August, the strike committee in the vast Lenin Shipyards of Gdansk rejected a favorable settlement of their own local claim, on the grounds that to do so would betray their fellow strikers elsewhere. It was the moment of truth. The realization dawned that the Party's monopoly of power was being challenged by the concerted action of workers up and down the country -- under the ironic slogan of 'WORKERS OF ALL ENTERPRISES – UNITE.' On 31 August in the Gdansk Agreement and later in a separate agreement signed with the miners' representatives at Jastrzebie in Silesia, government negotiators were obliged to meet the most important of the strikers' demands. In return for confirmation of the Party's leading political role, they formally accepted a long list of concessions including the workers' right to strike, their right to organize themselves into free trade unions, their right to construct a monument to colleagues killed in 1970, and a relaxation of censorship. In direct consequences of these agreements, delegates of strike committees from every province of Poland joined together as the National Co-ordinating Committee of a new Independent Self-governing Trades Union (NSZZ). They called their new organization SOLIDARNOSC (Solidarity); and they elected as their Chairman the thirty-seven-year-old unemployed electrician, who had climbed over the wall of the Lenin Shipyards to lead the crucial strike in Gdansk -- Lech Walesa.

The fifteen months of SOLIDARITY's legal activity were crowded with projects of reform, disputes, conflicts, arguments, agreements, scares, and alarums which followed each other in dizzy succession. Political life was alive and spontaneous for the first time in a generation. In November, there was an agony of suspense while the Warsaw District Court dithered over the Union's legal registration. In December, with the Soviet Army on manoeuvres, came the first, open threat of a Soviet invasion. In the

Spring, there was a protracted struggle over the recognition of SOLIDARNOSC WIEJSKA (Rural Solidarity), the peasants' union, accompanied by the uproar when in March Solidarity activists were assaulted by the Militia in Bydgoszcz. Only Walesa's superhuman efforts prevented a general strike. Throughout the summer months, feverish preparations led the way to Solidarity's First National Congress, held in Gdansk in two sessions in September 1981, and the passing of the movement's statutes and resolutions. In the autumn, all of Poland's universities and colleges joined an academic strike over academic reform.

Finally, frustration born of the failure to extract any substantial commitment from the authorities on numerous projects of reform under discussion led to an angry meeting of the Executive on December 3, 1981, where calls were made for free elections and a referendum on Poland's alliance with the Soviet Union. Secret microphones planted by the authorities recorded Walesa's agitated voice proclaiming the hopelessness of trying to reach agreement with an incalcitrant Party. The day of reckoning was at hand.

Much can be said...about the complex make-up of the SOLIDARITY movement, with its worker activists, its intellectual advisors, its Catholics, its students, peasants, old-age pensioners, and hangers-on of all shapes and sizes. Much may be said about Walesa's daily battle to hold the balance of the radicals and the counsellors of restraint. Much remains to be studied about SOLIDARITY's colossal intellectual output -- its press, its broadsheets, its debates, its sponsorship of historical enquiries, its ideas on economic and social reform. But two facts require no comment.

Firstly, with close to ten million members, SOLIDARITY represented almost every single family in the land, and thereby expressed the will of the overwhelming majority of the Polish nation. Secondly, SOLIDARITY remained true to its non-violent ideals. No steps were taken to provide it with the means of self-defense. When, on December 13, 1981, it was attacked by the communist security forces with tanks, guns, and batons, it had no arms, no independent communication network, and no plan of action. From this, flowed its lasting moral victory.

Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland
Norman Davies

III. Notes From The Underground

The massive outpouring of public support for (and participation in) the Solidarity movement convinced the Polish government that the Communist Party was losing its grip on power.

At 6 a.m. on December 13, 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski announced on Polish radio that the Council of State had declared martial law (in Polish, *stan wojenny*, literally, a state of war). Jaruzelski -- who had been appointed Defense Minister in 1968 just before the invasion of Czechoslovakia, Prime Minister in February 1981, and First Secretary of the Communist (Polish United Workers) Party in October 1981 -- justified martial law as a "necessary response" to strikes, crime, and increasing economic and political disorder.

Solidarity and KOR leaders were arrested and all civil liberties were suspended. In the first week of the crack-down, over 10,000 people were imprisoned, and over the next year 100,000 were taken into custody. Incidents of police harassment, beatings and murder continued sporadically. In the first four years, 100 workers and students were killed.

The workers resisted as best they could, occupying factories, shipyards and mines. The army sent tanks to smash through the gates of the Lenin shipyard and soldiers to drive out the occupying workers. Only a few Solidarity leaders escaped arrest. They, and other lesser known activists, struggled to keep Solidarity alive, issuing statements on passive resistance strategies and publishing clandestine newsletters.

The following documents, from 1982 to 1984, speak of this period of repression and resistance. The first account, of the army assault on the Lenin shipyard, was published in a French newspaper and reprinted in the *Solidarity Bulletin*. The other three items are from the *Committee in Support of Solidarity Reports*. They are: an essay by Solidarity activist Adam Michnik (written under a pseudonym while he was in prison) on why he and other prisoners should resist signing "declarations of loyalty" to the government; a report from a government-controlled newspaper on reprisals on citizens who took a walk during the official TV newscast; and a report from Solidarity underground on the coordination of resistance.

At the Steel Plant

This account, of the literal crushing of a strike, is translated in its entirety as it appeared in the French daily Le Quotiden de Paris *on December 24, 1981.*

On the fourteenth day of December in the steel plant Zawiercie, in Silesia, the military forces that had declared martial law in Poland the day before massacred dozens of workers. Neither Radio Warsaw nor the Soviet press agency Tass made any mention of the atrocities committed on that day.

The silence has been broken by an eyewitness who saw the scene from his window. Although he has fled to Sweden, he is still nervous and tense. In his eyes there is a terror, which may never fade, as he tells of unimaginable, unacceptable horror.

"It was the day after the military coup carried out by General Jaruzelski. The steel plant at Zawiercie had been occupied by a hundred workers since the day before. The government used all its methods to convince them to return to work. They refused to listen: they demanded the release of their imprisoned friends and the lifting of the state of war. To make quite sure that the forces could not get through, they even chained themselves to the locked gates of the factory. They stood there in the cold, in the snow, arm in arm, and faced with contempt the forces of order that surrounded them.

"It was then that the hideous bargaining began. The authorities, in a final effort to press the strikers, brought their families to the factory gates. Women arrived, and children -- trembling, shivering, weeping.

"One last time the authorities called for the workers to withdraw, threatening to open fire if they refused. Then a low murmur went through the crowd, and a slight trembling shook the chain of protestors. But no one moved. With not a cry, not one plea, they stood, and faced the troops. Then an officer ordered the soldiers to shoot.

"The silence was frozen. The troops made no move. They stood at attention, and one after another they shook their heads. Quite still, like a row of statues, they stood and stared at the officer who had given the order. Some were weeping. But none made a move, because a Polish soldier does not fire at a Polish worker.

"Faced with the soldiers' refusal, the government tried once again to start a dialogue with the strikers. But they might have been made of marble.

"Then the horror came. With a dull rumbling the tanks, which until then had kept some distance, began to advance. Some women started to scream, to hurl insults. Others remained silent, paralyzed by the depth of their despair. Children were crying in helpless rage. Still the tanks advanced. The workers faced them and did not flinch. The sole reply to the menace approaching them was the rattle of their chains. But they seemed to feel no fear.

"The tanks did not stop. They drove over the workers. They crushed them like puny insects. Never more strongly than at that moment have I felt the meaning of hatred, of madness, of despair. I wept, and the earth was bloody with needless dead."

Solidarity Bulletin, March 1982

Why You Are Not Signing

The following essay was smuggled out of Bialoleka prison in 1982 and circulated in the underground press. Considered a masterpiece of underground literature, it is both a personal reflection on prison life and an appeal to other political prisoners to resist secret police pressure to sign "declarations of loyalty" which renounce activities "harmful to the state and the government of the Polish People's Republic."

Freedom is a hand's reach away. A few strokes of the pen on the declaration of loyalty will suffice...

It is so easy to exchange your barred window, with its sharp outline of barbed wire, for freedom. The iron gates of Bialoleka will open before you, and instead of prisoners' walks you will see the streets of your native city, patrolled by police and tanks. and you will see people being checked, cars being stopped and their trunks searched. You will see the vigilant eye of the informer, fishing out from the crowd people suspected of "violating the regulations of the state of war." ...You will hear about further arrests, about people being sought, people hiding, about draconian sentences.

And even if you are capable only of small-minded calculation, you have your first reason for not signing: it isn't worth it. Here no one can detain you

"for explanations," here you have nothing to fear. It is paradoxical, I know, but if in the morning you are awakened by someone banging on the door, you are not afraid of uniformed guests: you know its only your kindly jailer bringing you your morning coffee. Here you feel no fear when you see an informer with restless eyes: here the spy is harmless. Bialoleka is a moral luxury and an oasis of freedom.

Sometimes they will try to scare you. My friend, a worker from a Warsaw factory, was promised 15 years of prison. Another was threatened with a trial for espionage. A third was interrogated in Russian. Still another was ordered out of his cell and told that he was going into the heart of Russia (they took him for an X-ray). But all this is bearable. Indeed, I think it is easier to bear than the morally and politically complicated situation on the other side of the barbed wire. A young woman, the wife of a Solidarity activist, was arrested and taken away from her sick baby (which she was informed, they had decided to place in a children's home). She signed the declaration. My friend was torn away from his mother, on her own and dying of cancer, and told that "there will not even be a lame dog to make your mother tea." He signed the declaration.

There is no point in multiplying the examples of cruelty of some, the helplessness of others, of tragic dilemmas and base blackmail. The decision lies always with the individual's voice of reason and conscience...

They take you to Bialoleka, where, in your prison cell, your teeth chattering with cold, you listen to the radio telling you that a war has been declared against your nation. It was declared by people who govern in the name of that nation, who in the name of that nation make declarations and sign international agreements, by people who publicly reach out towards reconciliation, while in secret they instruct the secret police to hunt and arrest us by night.

And then you are certain that you will not declare loyalty to these people, for they themselves are incapable of loyalty.

You do not know yet what this war means. You do not know yet know how the factories and steelworks, the shipyards and mines will be stormed... But one thing you do know: that such a declaration would be a denial of your self. It would wipe out your life's meaning. It would be the betrayal of people who trusted you; the betrayal of your friends who are scattered in prisons, sentenced and interned; the betrayal of all those who will defend you -- in Krakow with a leaflet, in New York or Paris with a public statement.

Nothing is definite yet. Your road is still open to you. You can still choose, but you know instinctively that to abandon your dignity is not a price that should be paid for opening the prison gates -- it is not a price worth paying... You are engaged in an argument that will never end. The argument... which says that the value of your involvement is not measured by the victory of your idea, but by the value of the idea itself. In other words: you win not when you gain power, but when you remain faithful to yourself...

You remember the history of your nation. You remember that within that history a declaration of loyalty made in prison was always a disgrace. Remaining faithful to yourself and to the national tradition was a virtue. You remember people tortured and imprisoned for years who did not sign such a declaration. And there are others who wander among your memories: those who lost the battle of dignity in prison. You see with the eyes of your soul Andrzej M., an excellent literary critic -- your friend -- who while in prison wrote a brilliant informer's essay, testimony to a moral death. You remember Zygmunt D., a charming friend, an intelligent boy, who broke down once and for years thereafter continued to inform on his colleagues. So you think with horror of these human shreds, of these people broken to bits by the police machine, and you see that your future is still an open slate. The choice is yours. But your memory commands you to repeat: you can become like that; no one is born an informer; every day you forge out your fate at the cost of your own life.

You have not yet heard the declaration of loyalty on the radio, nor the vile interrogations, nor the shameful statements. You do not yet know how Marian K. from Nowa Huta was tricked. He was a brave and intelligent Solidarity activist. In his statement he wanted to render unto Caesar what is Caesar's and unto God what is God's, and he rendered everything unto the police, for he did not stop to think that there are situations where ambiguity ceases to be ambiguous, and where the half-truth becomes a lie.

But you know that all this is nothing new, that you will not want to explain to these functionaries waving the order of release in front of your nose that it is they who are slaves, and no order of release will free them from that bondage... You will not want to explain to this functionary, who with sadistic pleasure dealt you a blow to the face, the meaning of the essay by Rozanov, describing the most significant conflict in European culture by the antagonism of the man who wields the whip to the man who is whipped. And you will not explain to him that your meeting is another incarnation of that

antagonism.

You will not talk to him at all.

Today if you shout at the functionaries, their [eyes] will reveal a glint of fear. This fear and uncertainty you will notice under their helmets, through their uniforms, from behind the police shields imported from Japan. And you will easily realize that this fear of the functionary is for you a certificate of hope -- of your hope.

It is over this that the battle is being waged: functionaries want to squeeze out of us a declaration that we have abandoned hope. The functionaries realize that he who declares his loyalty to the system of lies and coercion rejects hope for a Poland in which lies and coercion would be condemned. These declarations are supposed to transform us into servile base creatures who will not revolt in the name of freedom and dignity. But by refusing to engage in conversation with the functionary, by refusing to cooperate, by rejecting the status of a collaborator, by choosing the human condition of a political prisoner, you are preserving hope. You throw this--your declaration of hope--like a sealed bottle into the sea--from your prison into the world, among people. If you tell at least one person, you have won.

You know how keen is the feeling of desolation. You think that you are helpless in the face of this policy--a military machine that was set in motion on a December's night. But you know, as you stand alone, bound in handcuffs, with teargas on your eyes, facing functionaries waving their guns, you know -- and you see this clearly against the dark, starless night--you know, thanks to your favorite poet, that "the avalanche changes its course according to the stone over which it flows." And you want to be that stone which changes the course of events.

Even if it is to be but one of the stones thrown into the entrenchment.

Andrezej Zagozda (Adam Michnik)
Committee in Support of Solidarity Reports, June 7, 1982

A Walk Against the War

The following story from a government newspaper describes one tactic used to protest propaganda broadcast on the evening news: residents of the Olsztynska region all decided to go for an evening stroll:

A so-called walk was begun along Victory Street, near the investigative prison. However, even before reaching Copernicus Street, the already large group crossed the street heading toward City Hall.

According to ...the Regional Defense Committee (RDC), People's Militiamen cut off the so-called walk on Sklodowska-Curie Street, and checked the papers of the participants. There were two high school students, five university students, twelve workers, one teacher, and two unemployed among them. Petitions to punish three of the detained were sent to the misdemeanor court in Olsztyn. The court, in accelerated proceedings, punished these three with fines of 5,000 zlotys, exchangeable, in the case of inability to collect, for arrest. Two activists of Solidarity were interned on the basis of a decision of the Regional Militia Commander.

The RDC, during a meeting devoted to the evaluation of events that took place on May 13, issued instructions with regard to the treatment of participants in the so-called walk, who infringed on the rules of the state of war that forbid organizing and participating in assemblies. The RDC recommended that the two high school students and five university students be expelled, and the employees ...be dismissed. The detained teacher will be suspended...

Altogether, 600 persons' papers were checked. There were, among others, 10 grade school students, 123 high school students, 52 [university] students, and 200 persons who were not employed or engaged in study. The Committee instructed [the police] to notify the parents and the schools of students about the ID checks during the so-called walk. University authorities will receive letters listing the names of students. The managements of socialized enterprises will also be notified about the employees whose IDs were checked.

Committee in Support of Solidarity Reports, July 22, 1982

The Underground

With most of Solidarity's leadership in prison, a small group of those still in hiding organized themselves into a "Temporary Coordinating Commission." This statement, dated July 28, 1982, details their plans for survival underground.

The experience of eight months under the state of war teaches us that the struggle for our goals requires the universal participation of society, conscious of its inalienable rights and organized for long-term action.

The authorities' war on the Polish people continues. Only their tactics change... Consequently, the Temporary Coordinating Commission has assumed the position that only a social contract will make it possible for Poland to emerge from the present crisis. Proposals for such a contract have already been presented by the union, the Church, and various social groups. The authorities' response was complete silence. The authorities require only peace, or rather, obedience and work under conditions of waste and exploitation.

Our goal is to build an autonomous society -- a self-governing Republic -- in accordance with the program accepted at the First National Congress of Solidarity [in Sept. - Oct. 1981]. In the present situation we can achieve this goal only through [the creation of] an underground society...

The underground resistance movement must lessen the individual's feeling of isolation, must teach collective action, strengthen the awareness that only through organizing ourselves and through self-initiative can we reach our goals. It must show society the strength which flourishes within.

The underground society should above all:

a) make impossible the authorities' attempts to divide society;

b) develop the capabilities of self-organization and self-defense; and

c) raise the level of political culture and prepare society for life in a democratic Poland.

This underground ... society will be created by organized groups in factories, professional groups, in settlements, and among circles of friends...

Special attention should be paid to youth; as the most uncompromising and self-sacrificing group by nature, the weight of organizing various kinds of resistance rests and continues to rest upon them. Mass participation of youth in the underground movement will portend victory.

Every participant should be able to find it possible to act within the framework of the underground society. There is room for everyone who accepts our program...

We propose the following basic set of activities for the underground movement:

a) The organization of self-help for those repressed, for those who have lost their jobs and are living in need, for the sick and for others requiring material and moral support.

b) The organization of independent circulation of information, including publishing, distribution, the production of leaflets, and exposing the aims of the authorities' propaganda.

c) The organization of learning and self-education: independent instruction and an independent teaching movement; courses in continuing education; workers' universities; discussion clubs; academic publications; the instruction of the movement's organizers and activists; stipends and support for students, teachers and authors who are studying; the establishment of social foundations, etc.

d) The organization of actions demonstrating society's resistance: anniversary celebrations, posters, leaflets, participation in protests proclaimed by regional decision-making bodies or by the Temporary Coordinating Commission.

e) The organization of economic activities (cooperatives, workshops, and influencing economic pressures)...

The proposed actions will create a movement of a national community united around the idea of Solidarity. [This] underground society will become the basis for political activity, even if the union is delegalized, it will prevent society from losing faith, exert constant pressure on the authorities, threaten to isolate them completely, and force them to recognize the fact that only an accord leads toward a solution of the problems presently facing Poland.

[In this way, we can wage] ... an effective struggle for our current goals: freeing of political prisoners and those interned; ending the state of war; and reinstating an independent union movement; [as well as] for the long-run goal, the creation of a self-governing [Republic].

Temporary Coordinating Commission of Solidarity
Committee in Support of Solidarity Reports, September 6, 1982

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IV. Voices

Because of the skill of Poland's artists at depicting their countrymen's hopes, aspirations, fears and frustrations, silencing their voices became a priority for the Communist Party apparatus. Adam Mickiewicz, the symbol of Polish nationalism from the rule of the Russian Tzars, was censored or banned. Many living artists were forced into exile, while others, subject to harassment and arrest, continued to circulate their work through the *samizdat* underground.

The following six poems, spanning the years from 1832 to 1982, are from Adam Mickiewicz, Adam Wazyk, Stanislaw Baranczak and Zbigniew Herbert.

The Books of the Polish Nation:
From the Beginning of the World to the Martyrdom of the Polish Nation

In the beginning, there was belief in one God, and there was Freedom in the world. And there were no laws, only the will of God, and there were no lords and slaves, only patriarchs and their children. But later the people turned aside from the Lord their God, and made themselves graven images, and bowed down... Thus God sent upon them the greatest punishment which is slavery...

Then the Kings, renouncing Christ, made new idols which they set up in the sight of the people, and bade them bow down... So the kings made an idol for the French and called it HONOR; and this was the same that was called...the Golden Calf. And for the Spaniards, their king made an idol called SEA POWER AND COMMERCE, which was the same as Mammon... And for the Germans, an idol was made called BROTSINN or Prosperity which was much the same as Moloch... And the nations forgot they had sprung from one Father...

Finally, in idolatrous Europe there rose three rulers...a Satanic Trinity: Frederick [Emperor of Prussia], whose name signifieth 'Friend of Peace;'...Catherine [Empress of Russia], which in Greek signifieth 'pure;'...and Maria Theresa [Empress of Austria], who bore the name of the immaculate Mother of the Savior... Their names were thus three blasphemies, their lives three crimes, their memory three curses... And this Trinity fashioned a new idol, which was unknown to the ancients, and they called it INTEREST...

But the Polish nation alone did not bow down... And finally Poland said: 'Whosoever will come to me shall be free and equal, for I am FREEDOM.' But the Kings when they heard were frightened in their hearts, and said... 'Come let us slay this nation.' And they conspired together... And they crucified the Polish Nation, and laid it in its grave, and cried out 'We have slain and buried Freedom.' But they cried out foolishly...

For the Polish Nation did not die. Its body lieth in its grave; but its spirit descended into the abyss, that is into the private lives of people who suffer slavery in their country... But on the third day the soul shall return again to the body, and the Nation shall arise, and free all the peoples of Europe from slavery.

Adam Mickiewicz
1832 (an excerpt)

Poem for Adults

They ran to us shouting,
'Under Socialism
A cut finger does not hurt.'
But they felt pain.
They lost faith.

There are overworked people;
there are people from Nowa Huta
who have never been in a theater;
there are Polish apples unavailable for children;
there are children spurned by criminal doctors;
there are boys forced to tell lies;
there are girls forced to tell lies;
there are old ladies thrown out of their houses by their husbands;
there are exhausted people dying from heart attacks;
there are people slandered and spat upon,
people assaulted on the streets
by common hoodlums, for whom legal definitions can't be found;
there are people waiting for a scrap of paper;
there are people waiting for justice;
there are people who wait a long time.

We should make demands on this earth
about overworked people,
About keys that fit locks,
About houses with windows,
About walls without mildew,
About the hatred of scraps of paper,
About people's precious, holy time,
About a safe return to home,
About the simple distinction between words and deeds.
We should make demands on this earth,
which we didn't win in a game of chance,
which cost the lives of millions,
demands for the plain truth, for the harvest of freedom,
for fiery, good sense,
for fiery good sense.
We should make demands daily.
We should make demands of the Party.

Adam Wazyk
1955

If You Insist on Screaming Do It Quietly

If you insist on screaming, do it quietly (the walls
have
ears), if you insist on loving,
turn out the lights (the neighbors
have
binoculars), if you insist
on staying home, don't close the door (they
have search warrants),
if you
insist on suffering, do it in private (life
has
its rules), if
you insist on being, limit yourself in everything (everything
has
its limits)

Stanislaw Baranczak
1977

Write Legibly

Born? (yes, no, choose
one), why "yes"? (explain), where,
when, why, for whom do you live? with whom are you in touch
with the surface of your brain, whom do you meet
with the frequency of your pulse? relatives outside the frontiers
of your skin? (yes,no), why
"no"? (explain), do you have contacts
with the bloodstream of your time? (yes, no), do you write letters
to yourself? (yes, no) do you call
the confidential hotline? (yes,
no), do you feed
and with what do you feed your distrust? From where do you obtain
the means of supporting
your disobedience? Do you
own private resources
of permanent fear? Do you have knowledge of foreign
bodies and languages? Orders, Honors,
stigmas? Status of Civil Courage? do you intend
to have children? (yes, no)
why "no"?

Stanislaw Baranczak
1970

Report from the Besieged City

Too old to carry arms and fight like the others --

they graciously gave me the inferior role of chronicler
I record -- I don't know for whom -- the history of the siege

I am supposed to be exact but I don't know when the invasion began
two hundred years ago[1] in December[2] in September[3] perhaps yesterday at dawn
everyone here suffers from a loss of the sense of time

all we have left is the place the attachment to the place
we still rule over the ruins of the temples specters of gardens and houses
if we lose the ruins nothing will be left

I write as I can rhythm of interminable weeks
monday: empty storehouses a rat became the unit of currency
tuesday: the mayor murdered by unknown assailants
wednesday: negotiations for a cease-fire the enemy has imprisoned our messengers
we don't know where they are held that is the place of torture
thursday: after a stormy meeting a majority of voices rejected
the motion of the spice merchants for unconditional surrender
friday: the beginning of the plague saturday: our invincible defender
N.N. committed suicide sunday: no more water drove back
an attack at the eastern Gate of the Alliance

all of this is monotonous I know it can't move anyone

I avoid any commentary I keep a tight hold on my emotions I write about the facts
only they it seems are appreciated in foreign markets
yet with a certain pride I would like to inform the world
that thanks to the war we have raised a new species of children
our children don't like fairy tales they play at killing
awake and asleep they dream of soup of bread and bones
just like dogs and cats

in the evening I like to wander near the outposts of the City
along the frontier of our uncertain freedom
I look at the swarms of soldiers below their lights
I listen to the noise of drums barbarian shrieks
truly it is inconceivable the City is still defending itself

the siege has lasted a long time the enemies must take turns
nothing unites them except the desire for our extermination
Goths the Tartars Swedes troops of the Emperor regiments of the
Transfiguration[4]
who can count them
the colors of their banners change like the forest on the horizon
from delicate bird's yellow in spring through green through red to
winter's black

and so in the evening released from the facts I can think
about ancient matters for example our
friends beyond the sea I know they sincerely sympathize
they send us flour lard sacks of comfort and good advice
they don't even know their fathers betrayed us
our former allies at the time of the second Apocalypse
their sons are blameless they deserve our gratitude therefore we are
grateful
they have not experienced a siege as long as eternity
those struck by misfortune are always alone
the defenders of the Dali Lama the Kurds the Afghan mountaineers

now as I write these words the advocates of conciliation
have won the upper hand over the party of inflexibles
a normal hesitation hangs in the balance

cemeteries grow larger the number of defenders is smaller
yet the defense continues it will continue to the end
and if the City falls but a single man escapes
he will carry the City within himself on the roads of exile
he will be the City

we look in the face of hunger the face of fire face of death
worst of all -- the face of betrayal

and only our dreams have not been humiliated

Zbignew Herbert
1982

1. "Two hundred years ago" -- Poland's three partitions between 1772-1795.
2. "December" -- General Jaruzelski's declared martial law on December 13, 1981.
3. "September" -- the month in 1939 when Hitler and Stalin both invaded Poland.
4. "The regiments of Transfiguration" -- the Preobrazhenskii Regiment, one of the first of the Russian regular army, formed by Tsar Peter in 1699.

V. Change

Throughout 1989 and 1990, the world watched in awe as the people of Eastern Europe took to the streets demanding freedom and democracy. With Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's sensitivity to world opinion and refusal to use military intervention against popular mass movements in Europe, a window of opportunity had opened. Although the dissident movements in the Soviet bloc had been gaining strength for many years, Solidarity's 1989 success in getting Jaruzelski's government to cede power proved to be the beginning of the end for Communist rule, not only in Poland, but throughout Eastern Europe.

The following five articles deal with the internal forces that made change possible, and touch on the strengths and weaknesses which will impel and impede Poland's process of democratization.

A Negotiated Settlement

Communist authorities and the opposition leadership concluded a sweeping agreement today that is to legalize Solidarity, the independent union, and provide for democratic elections and institutional changes affecting almost every area of Polish life.

After more than eight weeks of arduous negotiations, a [Communist] party delegation... joined with Solidarity's leadership under Lech Walesa... for a formal signing of the agreements, which constitute one of the most ambitious social initiatives attempted in a Soviet bloc country.

Besides ending the seven-year ban on Solidarity, the bloc's first independent union movement, the "round-table" agreement calls for the creation of a new system of government headed by a powerful president and including a two-chamber legislature.

The new upper chamber, or Senate, will be chosen in a fully democratic election in June, while the ruling Polish United Workers' Party and its allies will be guaranteed a 60 percent majority in the more powerful lower house, or Sejm. Communist leader Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski is expected to be elected president.

In steps long unthinkable under communist rule, the agreement also provides for the creation of legal opposition media, including a daily newspaper and weekly television and radio programs.

A major reorganization of local government is planned, as well as liberal changes in agriculture, the legal system, health care and housing. An ambitious two-year program has been approved to clean up the environment, and a new law has been drawn up that will permit noncommunist groups to form and operate legally in a wide range of areas...

Following separate negotiations with the Roman Catholic Church here and in Rome, the government also announced agreement on a landmark law that will give the church legal status in Poland for the first time under communist rule.

Passage of the law by the legislature is expected to be followed by the establishment of full diplomatic relations between Warsaw and the Vatican, the first such ties involving a Soviet bloc country...

The weak link in the agreement, both sides concede, is the plan for Poland's economy, which is plagued by severe shortages, soaring inflation and an unmanageable $ 39 billion foreign debt.

Solidarity and the government agreed on a plan to index workers' wages to inflation, but the accord was rejected by the hard-line communist leadership of the national union organization set up by the party to replace Solidarity in 1982.

The dispute over indexation threatened to precipitate the breakdown of the overall negotiations. Solidarity's leadership held an emergency meeting this morning before deciding to conclude the economic agreement with the government apart from the official communist unions. Solidarity spokesmen accused the communist union apparatus, headed by Politburo member Alfred Miodowicz, of aligning with a dogmatic party minority seeking to scrap the round-table pact.

In a sign of the bitter split between the communist unions and Solidarity and the party leadership, the final ceremony on national television tonight was interrupted and then delayed for nearly three hours after Miodowicz threatened to walk out. He took part only after Solidarity and government leaders agreed to break the order of proceedings and allow him to deliver the third speech after [party spokesman] Kiszczak and Walesa.

Solidarity spokesmen said it remained unclear to what extent the government would live up to the many policy commitments made.

In a statement that surprised many opposition negotiators, Prime Minister Meczyslaw Rakowski said in a televised speech last weekend that all accords involving new spending or financial arrangements would have to be carefully reviewed by the government, which would decide if and when it could afford to carry them out.

One key element of the economic plan will be a concerted effort by government and Solidarity leaders to win western backing for Poland's economy, including relief on debt payments. A joint appeal on the debt is due to be issued, and Walesa is considering trips to western countries, including the United States, to lobby for aid.

The concluding days of the talks, which saw both Solidarity and the government issue statements criticizing the communist unions' leadership, underlined the radical realignment of political forces in Poland brought about by the round-table talks.

After seven years of polarization and impasse between a Solidarity-led opposition and the party, Walesa and his veteran political aides now find themselves locked in a de facto alliance with Jaruzelski aimed at rebuilding the economy and leading the country peacefully to an as yet undefined model

of political democracy.

Their opponents include not only the hard-line communists grouped around the official union organization but also radical opposition groups inside and outside Solidarity that reject Walesa's leadership or refuse to accept the elaborate compromise on the elections, presidency and legislature.

Leaders of prominent opposition youth groups such as the Freedom and Peace Movement have said they will not participate in the June elections. Even within Walesa's Solidarity organization many prominent activists are resistant to running for seats in the legislature.

The opposition is of particular concern to Solidarity and government leaders because of findings by public opinion polls that most Poles have not been stirred by the work of the round table, despite extensive nightly reports on television about its progress.

The polls by Solidarity and the government show that a large majority of citizens doubt that the reform program will improve the economic situation, and that a majority say they have not even taken an interest in the round-table proceedings.

According to the agreement worked out with the government, the Polish legislature could pass a law allowing the legalization of Solidarity as early as Friday and the union could be registered officially by the end of the month. Rural Solidarity, the farmers' union, has also been promised registration, as has the Solidarity-affiliated Independent Students' Union.

The apparent apathy the union faces from the general public contrasts sharply with a mood of exhilaration among the opposition elite, happy over the communist leadership's agreement to political changes that seemed impossible only eight weeks ago when the negotiations began. "It is incredible and overwhelming to us what has happened," said opposition strategist Adam Michnik.

The most dramatic change in the political system will be the creation of the Senate, which both sides assume will be controlled by the opposition. The 100-member body will be chosen in Poland's first democratic election since the 1920s, with nominations open to any candidate obtaining 3,000 signatures from voters.

Some of the toughest bargaining in the last week of the talks involved the powers of the Senate relative to the presidency and Sejm, both of which will be controlled by the party.

In a major breakthrough, opposition negotiators won agreement from the party early this week to give the Senate veto power over key legislation. The agreement means that if the opposition wins control of the Senate it may have the power to block key government measures and hold a legal check on party power unprecedented in the communist world.

The opposition also won restrictions on the powers of the president that could prevent a repeat of the sudden military crackdown that ended Solidarity's legal existence in 1981. The accord provides that the president can declare a national state of emergency for only three months without the legislature's approval and during this time can neither dissolve the legislature nor change the constitution and electoral laws.

Solidarity also won the party's agreement on changes in the judiciary that will make it more independent from party influence. Private farmers were promised that price controls over agricultural products and restrictions on land sales would be dropped.

Provincial and local governments, rigidly controlled by Warsaw for the last four decades, are to be given substantial control over local affairs and to be chosen through free elections.

In one agreement of potentially far-reaching economic significance, coal miners, a powerful lobby within Solidarity, won a promise that their work week will be reduced from six to five days.

The government's industry minister already has announced that the concession will reduce coal production by up to 15 percent and has proposed a plan to close several coal mines and make correspondingly drastic cuts in production by heavy industry.

Jackson Diehl, *Washington Post*, April 5, 1989

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The Polish Kaleidoscope of 1989

On August 24, the Sejm confirmed Tadeusz Mazowiecki's nomination to the office of prime minister -- Eastern Europe's first non-communist prime minister since 1948. Four decades ago, the communist parties of Eastern Europe -- installed by the Red Army -- relied upon the troops and policemen under their command to take control of the cultural, economic and social lives of their countries. Today, the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR), humiliated at the polls, has again fallen back upon its domination of the army and police in an attempt to preserve as much power as possible within the confines of a coalition government.

The world watched the events leading to Mr. Mazowiecki's nomination in astonishment. Four months earlier, few thought Solidarity and its nationwide network of Citizens' Committees could win such a sweeping victory in the June elections: Solidarity candidates took 99 of 100 freely contested Senate seats and all 161 of the seats allotted to the opposition in the lower -- but more powerful -- chamber, the Sejm. Nor did many think the Polish electorate would inflict such a thorough defeat upon the Communists and their satellite parties: virtually no PZPR candidate received more than 30% of the vote, and few non-communist candidates not affiliated with Solidarity received enough votes to avoid run-off elections....

Neither Solidarity's parliamentary delegation nor the opposition in general had prepared for a victory of such magnitude and now had to ask, "What next?" The Communists too seemed to caught off-guard; [they thought that] the round-table agreements [would] ensure the Party's continued domination of the country.

As Solidarity debated its next move and the communists reshuffled officials, General Jaruzelski, acting in his new capacity as president (a position endowed with sweeping powers by recent amendments to the Constitution), called upon Solidarity to join in a "grand coalition" under Communist leadership.

[Solidarity refused, leaving Jaruzelski without enough votes in the Sejm to elect a Communist prime minister. Despite severe misgivings -- about leading a government that contained Communists, and assuming the responsibility of leading the country out of the economic mess created by the Communists -- Solidarity agreed to form a new non-communist-led government.]

Uncaptive Minds, October, 1989

Testing Poland's patience.

THE AGE OF SOLIDARITY

By Adrian Karatnycky

GDANSK

It should have been a moment of resplendent triumph. Here in Gdansk, nearly a decade after its creation, after surviving martial law repression, and after a spectacular wave of worker militancy that led to the formation of their own government, the leaders of Poland's Solidarity trade union gathered in late April for their second national congress at the austere Olivia sports arena. But the meeting was oddly subdued. The bloom is off the movement that launched Eastern Europe's epochal revolution.

Coming back to the same hall where I had observed the first congress (see "In Congress Assembled," TNR, September 30, 1981), the differences were palpable. In 1981 most union leaders were in their twenties; this time the average age of the delegates was forty-two. The delegates in Gdansk represented just under two million dues-paying members, a far cry from the ten million who flocked to Solidarity's ranks during the heady months after the shipyard strikes of August 1980.

Even the Western media seemed disenchanted. Many reporters stayed only a couple of days, long enough to record Lech Walesa's election as union leader. (He won with nearly 80 percent of the vote.) In September 1981 the Solidarity trade union congress seemed to be at the center of the world's attention; at this congress photographers strained for a new angle from which to take pictures of its leader—one of the world's most photographed men. Indeed, much of the interest at the congress was sparked not by trade union or political controversies, but by Walesa's peripatetic flirtation with the office of president of Poland.

Solidarity's second congress was an acknowledgment of the union's loss of political innocence. Having toppled a Communist government and replaced it with one of its own, Solidarity was now grappling with more prosaic questions. Matters of concern were now "expanding service industries," creating a "Labor Protection Fund," and allowing for "voluntary early retirement." Nine years ago Solidarity was part trade union, part political party, part alternative culture. It embodied all the interests of the real Poland. Now, the union is an important force, but increasingly one force among many.

This is, of course, a reflection of the Solidarity movement's success. Solidarity has achieved the goal of a pluralistic Poland. And in the union's documents there are the beginnings of a differentiation—polite but clear—from the policies of the government. Is Solidarity a political party? No, the delegates decided, although it should have its own representatives in Parliament. Is it a trade union? Yes, but its role will extend beyond collective bargaining to participation in private and cooperative economic ventures. The union is deeply troubled by rising unemployment and about the fate of pensioners. It seeks government support for the retraining of workers made redundant by reform. Among its first actions at the congress was the removal of a clause in its charter prohibiting strikes, imposed as a condition of compromise with the now routed Communist authorities.

For many who have left the union for the new pastures of governance and legislation, this gathering was a kind of class reunion, not on the congress floor but in the rafters. Seated here, detached from the fray, was Andrzej Celinski, the founder of Poland's famous underground educational center ("the flying university"), who served as Solidarity's national secretary at the last congress. He is now a senator from a predominantly rural constituency and so is cut off from the union's inner workings. What free time he has is spent organizing the work of the Parliamentary Citizens' Club, the Solidarity political umbrella group that unites conservatives, Christian Democrats, and so-

cial democrats in an increasingly tenuous coalition.

On the second day of the congress a hulking figure in blue denim strode up the stairs of the sports arena. The silhouette was unmistakable. It was Jacek Kuron, longtime revolutionary and union adviser. Two days later Kuron would ascend the rostrum as Poland's labor minister to admit to delegates that the government "has no social program," and to urge the union to be his partner in shaping a social safety net to protect workers from unemployment, which will rise fourfold, from the current 260,000 to more than 1 million, or 7 percent of the work force in this country of 38 million.

Perhaps the most eminent union alumnus of all was Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the Polish prime minister. Speaking in precise, well-crafted paragraphs, Poland's most popular political figure delivered an extemporaneous elegy to the movement that had spawned him. With his stooped stance and his deep-set hound's eyes, Mazowiecki creates an instant intimacy with the public. Despite imposing a strict package of economic austerities on the Polish people, the ascetic, grandfatherly prime minister continues to ride high in the public opinion samplings as Poland's most popular leader.

Having created Eastern Europe's first democracy and given some of its best sons and daughters to the government, Solidarity is settling down and searching for a more precise purpose. Yet all this is not to say that the union is in crisis, as some reporters have suggested. For the last year it has been something of a silent partner, providing its own government with elbow room in which to work.

The Poland that the union now confronts is a country in the throes of deep recession. Industrial production is down by 32 percent since the beginning of the new year. Personal incomes are 60 percent of what they were last September. Although hyperinflation has been stopped, in March prices advanced by nearly 5 percent, suggesting an annual rate of about 75 percent. Janusz Beksiak, one of the union's leading economists, said, "We anticipated a recession. But this one is somewhat deeper than we expected." Beksiak bears some residual responsibility for Poland's economic state. It was in his Warsaw apartment that an economic team developed the contours of the government's policy. In its ranks were Leszek Balcerowicz, now the finance minister, and Harvard economist Jeffrey Sachs.

Although the country has made a momentous push toward real prices and the elimination of state subsidies, its move toward privatization is only now beginning, at a very slow pace. Solidarity will have an important role in this transition. The union already has set up an Economic Foundation to create jobs for union members laid off by unprofitable enterprises and has approved plans for a trade union bank and insurance company.

One of Walesa's best-known advisers, Adam Michnik, is concerned about the economic shock treatment Poland is undergoing. He jokes about how fashionable "our Chicago boys" have become, but adds, "In our context, if they succeed in privatizing 25 percent of the economy, it will be an awful lot. Our paradox is this: To get to Galbraith's destination you have to travel along the Friedmanite road." Michnik acknowledges that political differentiation within the Solidarity coalition is unavoidable but believes that the left-right dispute isn't yet significant. "In order to quarrel about the sort of market we should have, whether Friedmanite or one with a human face, we first have to have a market."

Yet as living standards have plummeted, so have the personal fortunes of many Solidarity leaders. Walesa's approval rating, once at 82 percent, now is at 46 percent, down sharply in the last month. Finance Minister Balcerowicz, who has imposed food and commodity price rises, is highly unpopular. Only the gruff Kuron, known for his plainspoken weekly television talks to the nation on social and economic issues, has seen his public approval rating rise in recent weeks.

Although Walesa isn't a George Bush when it comes to reading the polls, he certainly does feel the pulse of the average Polish worker. And his innate political sense is telling him that the process of political reform has to move more quickly. Lech Kaczynski, one of Walesa's trusted aides and the leading proponent of Walesa for the presidency, believes the government and Parliament are moving too slowly in removing the old Communist elite, such as General Wojciech Jaruzelski and Interior Minister Czeslaw Kiszczak. Kaczynski insists that "in the context of Eastern Europe's changes, we have to scrap the arrangements of last year's roundtable agreements." Others, such as Bronislaw Geremek, leader of the Solidarity Parliamentary Citizens' Club, believe a quick move against Communist holdovers would contribute to instability. They also believe that if the roundtable agreements were scrapped entirely, parliamentary and presidential elections would have to be held soon, raising questions about the stability and continuity of the Mazowiecki government. Solidarity has taken a middle ground, by calling for new national elections by May 1991—a move that is sure to result in the emergence of new political parties out of the Solidarity umbrella.

Although Solidarity now sounds more and more like a Western trade union and many of its activists are beginning to take separate political paths, its leaders remain nostalgic about their revolutionary past. At the congress, the most enthusiastic response was reserved for Kazimieras Uoka, a Lithuanian trade union leader, who was greeted with a standing ovation and chants of "*Wolna Litva!*" ("Free Lithuania!"). And though these days Solidarity appears to be a victim of its own successes, it is likely to benefit in the end from the market system it has helped put into place. The inadequacies of democratic capitalism—the concentrations of wealth and disparities in income it produces—are certain to give the union a key role in the brave new Poland.

ADRIAN KARATNYCKY, director of research at the AFL-CIO Department of International Affairs, is co-author of *The Hidden Nations*, a book on nationalism in the U.S.S.R., to be published this fall by William Morrow.

Poles not at the polls.

MISSING THE VOTE

By Maria Balinska

WARSAW

Two weeks before Poland's local elections—the country's first completely free elections in half a century—an especially weary-looking Tadeusz Mazowiecki had a sobering message for Krakow's seventy-five Solidarity-backed candidates. "I have the impression," the prime minister said, "that . . . people still see these elections as reruns of past local elections, except with Solidarity candidates." He was right. Here, finally, was the opportunity to banish small-town party hacks who were resisting the winds of change from Warsaw. Just as fundamentally, these elections and the new law separating the powers between central and local government were designed to usher in autonomous, accountable town halls. But the campaign never took off. Fifty-eight percent of the electorate staved home on May 27.

The contrast to last year's parliamentary election, which led to the fall of the Communists, could not have been greater. Then, every available vertical surface—tree, shop front, tram—was plastered with the Solidarity logo and the smiling Lech Walesa clasping the local candidate. This time you had to make an effort to find campaign posters, despite the fact that more than eighty political groupings were vying for public support. Even novel inducements like offering free "election sausage" to those who showed up at rallies failed to attract many people. And scant press coverage did nothing to raise the campaign's low profile.

In discussing with Poles this public lapse into passivity I kept encountering one phrase: "It's easier to break out of prison than to know what to do once you're out." Last year the extreme unpopularity of the country's former rulers was an obvious spur to political activity. Volunteers sprang out of the woodwork. Now that they have overthrown the Communists, many Poles regard running for public office with a certain dread. In small towns and villages the Citizens' Committee (the umbrella organization Walesa created to fight in last year's elections, in which the Communists had guaranteed themselves a majority of seats in the lower house of Parliament) often had to twist arms or make do with second best in order to get enough people on the slate.

Those candidates who took their responsibilities seriously faced seemingly insurmountable obstacles. To begin with, there was no information available about their local districts. Up until the elections even most maps remained confidential. As for finances or property holdings, the *nomenklatura*, feverishly using their last days in office to buy and sell municipal land cheaply, were naturally reluctant to divulge any figures.

The Solidarity Citizens' Committee adopted a typically pragmatic approach to the problem: it set up a Candidates' Advice Center in Warsaw. Decorated with fantastical theater posters, the Center seems to have offered more group therapy than political advice. Andrzej Lubiatowski, the architect who runs it, says this was inevitable since candidates and "experts" alike (architects, lawyers, and psychologists chosen for their interest in urban issues) were learning from scratch. The typical candidate came in without any questions at all, expecting handouts on his or her local district. "Anything," says Lubiatowski, "that would keep them from thinking for themselves." Only on the second or third visit would he or she begin to ask questions: What is local government? How does it draw up its budget? How should the signs outside the local government office be painted? Platform ideas came last and, according to Lubiatowski, consisted mostly of "beautiful dreams with no regard for reality and, in particular, money." The final session of advice-giving—a dose of cold water—convinced most candidates that promises were out of the question for this campaign.

The Solidarity badge of approval remains the surest way to identify "good" people. Hence the bitter fights between rival political groupings in the mill city of Lodz over the right to use *Solidarnosc* in their title. (In the end Solidarity granted neither the privilege, and both used it.) With one or two exceptions, the Citizens' Committee represented the Solidarity option. In cities they won an easy 85 percent to 97 percent of the council seats, although their overall score was brought down to 41.5 percent by poor results in rural areas, where there is opposition to the present government's agricultural policy. But the victories were deceptive: no major political party ran opposite them. Thirty-eight percent of the seats went to so-called independents, a grab bag of former Communists, mavericks, and local personalities. Ironically, it may very well be the broad social base of the Solidarity movement—the famous worker-intellectual coalition—in the 1980s that has made Poland lag behind Czechoslovakia and Hungary (where opposition to the Communists was mainly confined to intellectual circles) in developing a number of political parties. Moreover, few people want to stand outside the Solidarity ethos. The other problem, of course, is that the trail of destruction and cynicism that the Communist Party has left in its wake has tainted the very notion of political party.

For those parties that did challenge Solidarity it was not as important to win these elections as to establish themselves as viable political alternatives. Their campaign platforms were on national issues—principally economic policy—and were highly critical of the Mazowiecki government. But few of them—from anarchists and former Communists to business disciples of the economist Friedrich Hayek and nationalist extremists—even registered on the nation's political consciousness. The Communists, slimmed down (from 2 million to 70,000 members) and repackaged as the Social Democratic Party, are now articulate advocates of the new democratic system. They do not have a very high profile, however. (It took me forty-five minutes to track down their offices in what used to be the highly guarded Communist Party Headquarters in Krakow.)

And their election score—0.28 percent of seats—was predictably low. (They claim that they have more like 6 percent since many of their comrades, fearful of public revulsion against the left, ran as independents.) The two main parties on the right—the Confederation for an Independent Poland and the Christian Nationalist Union—each cornered 0.1 percent of the seats. The only force to emerge with any certainty was the Polish Peasants Party, a union of the remains of one of the Communists' former allies and other peasant groupings, which won 6.5 percent of the seats.

Now that the local elections have taken place, Mazowiecki, in the words of one farmer, has shoes as well as a hat. But the fact that a majority of the electorate didn't help to choose the shoes reflects an apathy that goes beyond the disorientation of people new to democratic thinking. Inevitably, much of the political indifference comes from frustration with the economic situation. There was a general realization when Mazowiecki took office that things would get worse before they got better. But as time goes by, the determination with which many people initially met slashes in subsidies and the freeze on salaries is being eroded. Finance Minister Leszek Balcerowicz's IMF-approved economic plan is doing what it was supposed to: inflation has fallen from the 78 percent monthly rate in January to just over 4 percent in the month of May. But the structure of the Polish economy has changed little apart from the appearance of huge numbers of private street vendors crowding the city sidewalks with meat, butter, cheese, and bread marginally cheaper than that in the stores behind them. Those stores are still part of the state monopoly.

Privatization—the second crucial plank of the Balcerowicz plan—is being stalled for political reasons. And the resistance is not just from the 65 percent of Parliament associated with the old regime, but also from an influential left-leaning chunk of Solidarity deputies.

To begin with, there's the question of whom to sell the state businesses to. The Ministry of Finance wants to take bids from the first paying customer—with few questions asked. Solidarity deputies insist that workers be given preferential access to the shares in their factory. Unfortunately, in many cases it is the present managers—from the ranks of the despised *nomenklatura*—who are better qualified to become the country's new industrial entrepreneurs. (Eager not to imitate the purges of its Communist predecessors, the Mazowiecki government has been slow in replacing managers, civil servants, and even television journalists.) Public reaction would be fearsome if these people were to become the new bosses at the dawn of capitalism.

The second major problem of privatization is unemployment, which currently stands at an estimated 400,000—3 percent of the population. Worse is yet to come (the World Bank predicts 2 million). Solidarity is understandably reluctant to back measures that will throw its members out of jobs. And as the economic situation worsens, the response of the public to unemployment is likely to become more and more volatile. There was a foretaste in the recent rail strike, which threatened to bring the country to a halt but which Walesa, in a dramatic late-night meeting, managed to call off.

Another controversial government idea is allowing local governments to run their own businesses for profit. The reasoning behind this is simple. Cities, towns, and villages don't have much money. At the same time the market economy is proving slow to develop. So why not let the newly elected local representatives try their hand at entrepreneurship? One proposal currently making the rounds in Krakow is to open a municipal bank that would be owned by the city and, of course, would invest in the city. This sounds like the best of all possible worlds—which is precisely why so many people, wary of anything smacking of utopianism, oppose it. The government's right-wing opponents accuse it of trying to introduce socialism through the back door. Supporters of the idea defend it as a temporary solution, but the only guarantee they offer for this is the "quality" of the people who would be in charge.

Poland, however, is coming to the end of the period when national politics could be summed up in the words "Solidarity" and "Communists." The split is essentially between the radicals and the gradualists, between those who would rather see more done to encourage private initiative and those who continue to want a substantial role for the state, between those who want to see political parties and those who want to preserve a broad-based social movement.

Walesa seems determined to transform the Citizens' Committee into a viable political force, able to challenge the group of more left-leaning Solidarity deputies holding sway in Parliament. He recently dismissed one of those deputies, Henryk Wujec, from the position of national Citizens' Committee secretary. As Walesa seems to realize, the current public apathy—whether from the exhaustion of making ends meet, dissatisfaction with the present government, or simply not understanding the process of local democracy—is dangerous. It can all too easily be turned into extremist action, as the rail strike demonstrated. The emerging nationalist groups are also hoping to exploit the discontent to their own political advantage. They have been marginalized in these elections, but that could all change by next year's parliamentary elections.

MARIA BALINSKA is a free-lance journalist specializing in Eastern European affairs.

POLISH POLITICS
Walesa Runs for President

BY ADRIAN KARATNYCKY

BELWEDER PALACE

GDANSK

SITTING IN HIS spacious, sparely furnished office, Lech Walesa has the easy look of a confident fighter who has just stepped into the political ring. Ten years ago, as an unemployed electrician, he climbed the wall of the Lenin Shipyard only a short distance away to lead an epoch making strike. Now Walesa is again at the center of Polish political life. For over a year, the Solidarity leader had maintained a low national profile. But after having entrusted former associates in the Solidarity movement with the task of forming and running the government, Walesa is once more convinced his country needs him. On September 17 he formally entered the race for President.

During the last three months, driven in part by pressure from workers increasingly unhappy about the slow pace of political reform and in part by his own considerable ambitions, Walesa has been positioning himself for the two-round balloting set to start November 25. He is unabashed in declaring that he will be moving into Belweder Palace, the presidential residence occupied by his arch rival and ex-captor, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, whose term has been cut short by Parliament. "It's not a question of whether I will be President," Walesa asserts. "I *will* be President, because that's what the people want."

Not everyone, of course, agrees. His formidable opponents have lined up behind the candidacy of the present Prime Minister, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, and have formed their own Citizens Movement-Democratic Action Party (better known by its Polish acronym, ROAD). The Solidarity chairman is staunchly backed by the Right-leaning Center Alliance Party.

Walesa is disappointed in the actions of his erstwhile colleagues. "I have some misgivings about those whom I nominated to make the reforms. They did

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ADRIAN KARATNYCKY, *a previous contributor to* THE NEW LEADER, *is director of research in the International Affairs Department of the AFL-CIO and co-author of* The Hidden Nations: The People Challenge the Soviet Union, *to be published by Morrow this fall.*

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not take advantage of the system when it collapsed and changed in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe." Gesturing vehemently, he argues that the disintegration of Poland's Communist Party should have signaled an end to the April 1989 round-table agreement that still ensures a parliamentary majority for the deflated Communists and their ex-junior partners, the United Peasants' Party and the Democratic Party. "What we have now is an immoral order. And the sooner we are rid of it the better," he says.

Walesa's critics contend that his campaign for political and economic "acceleration" is dangerous and destabilizing. At the same time, they have accepted some of his prescriptions. Within weeks of his pressing for a speed-up of the reform process, Parliament passed a landmark privatization law, and parliamentary leader Bronislaw Geremek expressed support for advancing the presidential elections.

Walesa's determined push for rapid change is motivated by his sense that Polish workers, now suffering a 50 per cent decline in living standards, will no longer abide the continued presence of Communists in the upper reaches of Parliament, the ministries and management. He is convinced that for the Polish economy to work, the vestiges of the *nomenklatura* system of political patronage must be uprooted to clear the way for a new generation of competent leaders and managers.

In recent weeks, both at home and in the Western press, Walesa has come under severe criticism for alleged antidemocratic and anti-Semitic propensities. I didn't know exactly what to expect when I arrived for our meeting here, having last encountered him at the Solidarity Congress in April, shortly before the emergence of the political rivalries that have driven a wedge in the once unified Solidarity movement. But his cheerful demeanor and often passionate responses to questions project an image of a modern politician eager to head what may soon be a normal European state. About the accusations that he is an autocrat, for example, Walesa fairly bristles: "I'm trying to create a multiparty political system, based on a Left and Right. Who then is the bigger democrat? I or my opponents, who would prefer to preserve a political monopoly based on a false unity?"

Walesa also does not understand the basis for the contention that he is anti-Semitic. "Before the press prints charges of my anti-Semitic tendencies, I ask only one thing, that such charges be documented and that I be confronted directly by such evidence," he says emphatically. Then he goes on to tick off the evidence to the contrary: He has erected a plaque in memory of the victims of anti-Jewish pogroms; he has interceded with the Minister of Culture to step up efforts to protect historical Jewish sites as landmarks; he nominated Elie Wiesel for the Nobel Peace Prize; he was arrested while trying to attend commemorations of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising; and he has counted a number of Jews in his inner circle.

Jewish activists in Walesa's camp rush to his defense. Even some of his fiercest political opponents, including Adam Michnik, editor of the independent daily *Gazeta Wyborcza* and a member of Parliament, are quick to point out that neither Walesa nor his advisers are anti-Semites. What troubles them, these critics say, is the fact that anti-Semites are the bedrock of pro-Walesa supporters.

The Solidarity leader finds the whole controversy frustrating. "If I speak out about manifestations of anti-Semitism," he notes, "my friend Adam Michnik tells me to drop the matter and not to place undue emphasis on Jewish issues. But when I follow such advice, Jewish activists accuse me of failing to confront anti-Semitism. I'm damned if I do and damned if I don't."

"The problem," says essayist and former political prisoner Czeslaw Bielecki, "is not with Lech Walesa. He is a strong defender of Jewish, Ukrainian and other minority rights. The real problem is that some of Walesa's Jewish critics have long sought to hide their Jewishness and to render Jews invisible in Poland. I'm a Jew and not ashamed of it. I feel that Jews who remain in Poland are entitled to, and have, full participation in Polish political and cultural life. Regrettably, many Jews who were active in the Solidarity movement sought to de-emphasize their ethnic origins. But that's their problem and not Walesa's or Poland's."

MANY WHO OPPOSE Walesa complain that he has become obsessed with and seeks to emulate the actions of one man, General Jozef Pilsudski, who led a democratic Polish State for six years and later ruled as an iron-fisted dictator. A two-foot-high statue of Pilsudski occupies a corner of Walesa's office. But Walesa insists the General is not a political model: "I respect what he did for Poland. For a period of his life he was an outstanding leader who knew what he was doing and did a great deal for the country. Viewed from today's perspective, however, certain actions, particularly the violation of democracy, were evidence not of strength but of weakness."

Nevertheless, Polish life is more and more coming to be dominated by highly politicized reporting and by partisan hyperbole that portrays Walesa as a potential Caesar. That much criticism of the Solidarity chairman is hyperbole is apparent from the proposal of Jan Litynski, a leader of ROAD, that Walesa would make an excellent Prime Minister with Mazowiecki as President. While his opponents are now searching for a way to accommodate Walesa, he derides Litynski's suggestion. "They're doing funny things. How can the guy who put the whole system in place now be the Prime Minister. This proposal is like a joke at a funeral," he laughs. "On the road to democracy, such a possibility existed. But things have gone a bit further and I'm not at all interested."

Former Warsaw trade union leader Zbigniew Janas, a pro-Mazowiecki member of Parliament, confirms the exaggerations distorting the current political debate as partisan passions rise. "Lech is sometimes intemperate," Janas says, "He's sometimes difficult to get along with. But when all is said and done, Solidarity, the union he has shaped, is highly democratic."

Walesa himself recognizes that his re-

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cent metaphor of an axe-wielding president who issues decrees was unfortunate: "I meant only that when a system is changing there are so many loopholes, so many gaps, they have to be resolved. Not against the law, not against the democracy. My idea was for the President to intercede to prevent the violation of law in a period before the Parliament or the government have a chance to act. Perhaps the use of the term decree aroused concern. My basic idea was for the President to act and then for the Parliament to quickly pass appropriate legislation."

The public, Walesa argues, is simply fed up with reading about how former Communist apparatchiks signed sweetheart deals between ministries or enterprises they headed and the new private firms to which they moved. "Decrees were needed, decrees are needed," he summarizes, "and they'll be needed for a long time to come. But not against the Parliament. Only to remove obstacles stymieing the transition to democracy."

WALESA'S PATH to the Presidency is hardly clear. Prime Minister Mazowiecki, a former editor of a Catholic monthly and a man who was deeply involved with Solidarity's struggle, is an impressive rival. A mid-September poll showed him receiving 50 per cent of the vote and Walesa 35 per cent, with 15 per cent undecided. But the expectation here is that those numbers will change as the campaign heats up. Walesa's charismatic personality is likely to give him an edge over the low-keyed, methodical Mazowiecki in any face-to-face debates. In addition, the tens of thousands of union activists who have stuck with the Solidarity chairman through thick and thin over 10 tumultuous years will soon be pounding the pavement in his behalf.

Should Walesa win the election, he would confront the problem of assuming office without the sage and seasoned counsel of many of his most astute advisers, who have gone over to Mazowiecki's team. Using imagery from poker, Walesa refers to his present advisers as "10s" and to his one-time aides as "aces." The awareness that he would need to have a few aces in his hand may be one reason why he has so far tempered his criticism of ROAD.

A Walesa victory, though, would provide the breathing space to introduce more reforms, since as a new man at the top he would surely enjoy a "honeymoon" period. I asked him precisely what kind of program he would pursue.

Walesa stresses, first, that he would continue the swift transition to a market economy and rapid privatization. "This is what Polish workers want," he says. "They want it even more than the elites." He also would press for the return of property questionably transferred to private accounts by Communist ministers and managers. But on other domestic matters he refuses to be pinned down, contending that he prefers to stand above the partisan fray and try to gain the votes of the vast majority —a position that may be less tenable as the campaign progresses. "I want to rule with at least 80 per cent support," he declares optimistically.

TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI

In the area of foreign relations Walesa exhibits little reticence. He would demand the immediate withdrawal of the remaining Soviet troops in Poland. And he is firmly persuaded that the Soviet Union's days are numbered: "One of the first things I said as a politician was that the USSR has only one way out: to dissolve itself and to then reunite on the basis of freedom and democracy. There is no other way out. What we began is inexorable. Communism can no longer be sustained.... The only question is how long the process will take and what the price of the transition will be."

Recent actions emanating from Washington have meanwhile disappointed Walesa, especially the finally declined invitation extended to General Jaruzelski to visit the United States in mid-October. When the Solidarity chairman came to the U.S. last November, he was lionized as a conquering hero. He was the second private citizen ever to address a joint session of Congress, and he was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom by George Bush, who two years earlier had stood alongside him in Gdansk in a show of American support. Yet today there is an edge of annoyance in Walesa's voice when he speaks of the United States: "The U.S. is a democracy, and it must remember that we Poles still have to realize our democracy. Jaruzelski didn't have the slightest chance of being elected President. Placing your bets on him was absolutely without logic. But Americans don't always act logically."

What about the future of the Solidarity trade union if its chairman is elected President of the country? Walesa believes the union has strong local and national leadership and will be a potent force in Polish life. Solidarity's long years of doubling as an umbrella political coalition, he observes, were detrimental to its activities on the labor side. Now that the political responsibilities have been shifted onto the shoulders of the emerging parties, he thinks the trade union will grow. He even smiles and relishes the idea that some day soon he may face his Solidarity colleagues in wage negotiations.

Over the last decade Lech Walesa has demonstrated his staying power and his shrewd political instincts. But there is something of the friendly, reassuring uncle to him, too, and he sees politics as a wondrous game. Having once before jumped fences, he is eager to scale Poland's "highest wall"—the barrier that surrounds Belweder Palace.

VI. Suggested Discussion Questions

I. 1) Why does Unger say that "Poland is a people before it is a state"? What impact did this have on national survival during periods of foreign rule? What impact might this have had on the treatment of minorities?

2) According to Unger, what were the reasons that the imposition of Communist rule proved to be so difficult in Poland?

3) How did the Communist government change the oath of the Polish military? In light of Polish history, why would this and other post-WWII changes be especially resented by the Poles?

4) Why was the Roman Catholic Church especially significant in Poland? How did the Communist Party attempt to diminish its influence?

II. 1) According to Ash, what is the "classic precondition" for revolution? How did the Pope's visit affect the course of events? Using what you learned from Unger, name two other factors that contributed to the rise of Solidarity.

2) What did Lech Walesa ask workers to do in 1979? How does this relate to the evolution of the workers' list of demands during the first day of the 1980 Lenin Shipyard strike?

3) What was the Gdansk Agreement? What did the government negotiators require of the workers before meeting their demands?

4) What were the demands made by the Solidarity Executive Committee in their December 3, 1981 meeting? What would the fulfillment of these demands have meant for the future of Communist rule?

III. 1) Why does Michnik say that his prison is an "oasis of freedom"? What are the tactics that the government has used to get opponents to sign the declaration of loyalty? Why do you think that they would go to such extreme lengths to obtain a signature that they know isn't sincere?

2) Michnik says that he would like to be the stone that changes the course of the avalanche. What individuals can you think of, either in the U.S. or abroad, whose perseverance of purpose has changed the course of history?

3) Why would not listening to the official newscast be seen as a threat to the Party? How does this relate to the importance given to the declarations of loyalty?

4) How does Solidarity plan to function under martial law? What is the Temporary Commission's short-term goals? Its long-term goal?

IV. 1) Adam Mickiewicz's "The Books of the Polish Nation" is written in the style of Biblical prophesy. What does he say will happen in Poland? In what ways were his predictions correct? In which ways were they wrong?

2) Many of the grievances in "Poem for Adults" could pertain to the lives of poor and working-class people anywhere, including in the U.S. and other modern democracies. Why, according to Wazyk, were these hardships particularly difficult for the Poles? What does he call on them to do?

3) Does Baranczak think that it is possible for people to make demands on the Party? What advantages do citizens in a democracy have that both Wazyk and Baranczak think that Poles also need?

4) Herbert, describing a continuum of conquest and occupation (a siege as long as eternity), implies that those in the West (our friends from across the sea) can't truly understand the plight of the Poles. Do you agree? Why? Why not?

V. 1) What was agreed to in the round-table negotiations? Why do you think the government signed off on these changes? According to *Uncaptive Minds*, what did the government think would happen?

2) How does Solidarity's second congress differ from its first? How have the changes that Solidarity achieved for the country affected the Union?

3) According to Balinska, how was the political landscape changing before the May 27, 1990 local elections? Many Poles feared that voter apathy during these elections indicated a weakness in the process of democratization; considering the consistently low voter turnouts in U.S. elections, what do you think that voter apathy indicates in Poland? In the U.S.?

4) According to Karatnycky, what are some of the issues that would be decided by the presidential elections? Some observers believe that the political split within Solidarity is dangerous, saying that concerted action and unity of purpose are necessary for Poland's transformation; others believe that the split is a positive sign that Poland's democracy is evolving, and maintain that open opposition and debate will be healthy for Poland's transformation. From what you have read and what you know about American democracy, which do you believe is most true? Why?

Cartoon 1 (From 1988, by an Eastern European artist. The writing is in cyrillic, the lettering of the Russian language. It says "product number," a stamp common to goods produced in Soviet prison camps.)

From Uncaptive Minds, *June-July-August, 1988.*

Cartoon 2 (1982)

Cartoon 3 (1990)

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Cartoon 4 (1989)

Cartoon 1: What does the artist think the Soviet system has produced? Is he hopeless about the prospects for change?

Cartoon 2: What is the cartoon saying about America's role in Jaruselski's military government? Why would this have been significant for Poland?

Cartoon 3: What is the artist saying about the USSR's ability to hold the Soviet bloc together? What does he predict for the future? Do you think he is right?

Cartoon 4: What is being said about the pace of change in Eastern Europe? Who in Poland do you think would like to hit either the pause or rewind buttons?

Suggested Activities

1. Using your knowledge of the Bill Of Rights and what you have learned about the democracy movement in Poland, design a model Bill Of Rights for the new Polish government.

2. Research the tactics used by Martin Luther King Jr. and A. Philip Randolph in winning civil rights for African Americans. Compare them with the tactics used by Polish dissidents to win democracy, human and civil rights for their country. Write a report explaining the advantages and disadvantages of each group of people.

3. Choose one country in Eastern Europe other than Poland and make a timeline of events in its quest for freedom. Illustrate your timeline. If a computer is available, draw your timeline, using the *Timeliner* computer program. Cover the time period 1919-1991.

4. Divide students into small groups. Assign each group one country that has emerged from dictatorship (Czechoslovakia, the Philippines, Spain, Japan, Argentina, Panama, Chile) and have them research the circumstances under which the dictatorship was ended (or perhaps not yet completely ended). Within each group have two students consider what effect external forces may have had, two others what institutions played key roles (churches, unions, civic groups, the military, etc.), two others what role(s) the most significant leader(s) played.

Reorganize students into new groups according to their specialty. Each new group should prepare to argue that the factors that they studied (outside forces, internal institutions, or outstanding leaders) were most important in bringing down the dictatorship. Each student should then write a short essay on what combination of factors seems necessary to successfully defeat a dictatorship.

5. Think about the needs and difficulties that might be inherent in separating the press, property, industry, student organizations, an educational system, the arts and other civic institutions from the state. Follow the newspapers over the next several weeks, noting different problems that the Poles and other Eastern Europeans will have to overcome if they are to create a stable democratic society. Develop a scrap book documenting the growth, or lack thereof, of independent civic institutions in Eastern European countries.

6. Consider the fate of such short-lived democratic governments as the Russian Provisional Government of 1917, Weimar Germany in the 1920's, Czechoslovakia in 1946-48, or Brazil from 1945-64. Split the class into four groups and assign one of the countries to each. Have them look at the political traditions, economic conditions, relations between the socio/economic classes, character of the activist movements, role of external forces, and roles of the key individuals in their country. Have each group report on what factors they think are necessary for a democratic society to flourish. Ask the class to try to use these findings to predict the future of Poland.

7. Read the enclosed material on martial law by Czeslaw Bielecki (a.k.a. Maciej Poleski), then write an essay which explains Bielecki's strategy of opposition (including his 11 month hunger strike), in which you explain why you think it should or should not be emulated.

8. (For students who have already completed American history and American government courses, this would be a challenging undertaking, and could be adapted as a final exhibition project in an advanced-level government or history course.)

Read the supplementary material on Polish high school students' attitudes about "the komuna" and recent political changes in their country.

Split students into small groups which will prepare a presentation on "Democracy in America," aimed at Polish students. Students may wish to use any combination of essays, letters, literary and historical quotes, photographs, video, audio tapes, or any other media, to address such themes as: history; government; culture; the evolution of rights and responsibilities; popular attitudes toward the democratic system; strengths and weaknesses of American political arrangements; the civic society; union and disunion in a multicultural, multi-partisan society; hopes (and/or fears) for the future.

Resources

Histories, Articles & Essays

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Ash, Timothy Garton. *The Polish Revolution: Solidarity.* New York: Charles Scribner & Sons, 1983.

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Czarnecka, Ewa and Aleksander Fiut. *Conversations With Czeslaw Milosz.* San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1987.

Davies, Norman. *The Heart Of Europe: A Short History Of Poland.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986.

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Karpinski, Jakub. *Countdown: The Polish Upheavals of 1956, 1968, 1970, 1976 and 1980.* Karz-Cohl Publishers, 1982.

Kaufman, Michael T. *Mad Dreams, Saving Graces: Poland, A Nation In Conspiracy.* New York: Random House, 1989.

Krall, Hanna. *Shielding The Flame: An Intimate Conversation With Dr. Marek Edelman, The Last Surviving Leader Of The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.* New York: Henry Holt, 1986.

Labedz, Leopold. *Poland Under Jaruzelski.* New York: Scribner's, 1984.

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Michnik, Adam. *Letters From Prison And Other Essays.* Berkeley: University Of California Press, 1986.

Milewski, Jerzy, Krzysztof Pomian and Jan Zielonka. "Poland: Four Years After," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 64, No. 2, Winter 1985/1986.

Mur, Jan. *A Prisoner Of Martial Law: Poland 1981-1982.* San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1984.

Spasowski, Romuald. *The Liberation Of One*. San Diego: Harcourt, Brace & Jovanovich, 1986.

Szulc, Tad. "Poland's Path," *Foreign Policy*, No. 72, Fall 1988.

Literature

Andrzejewski, Jerzy. *Ashes and Diamonds*. Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 1990.

Herbert, Zbigniew. *Selected Poems*. Ecco Press, 1986.

Konwicki, Tadeusz. *A Minor Apocolypse*. F. S. & G., 1983.

Milosz, Czeslaw. *Captive Mind*. New York: Random House, 1990.

Zagajewski, Adam. *Solidarity, Solitude*. Ecco Press, 1989.

Periodicals

Committee In Support of Solidarity Reports: 1981-1987 (50 issues). New York: Institute For Democracy In Eastern Europe. Although no longer in publication, a complete set of unique original source material is available to school or local libraries for $75. 48 East 21st Street, New York, NY 10010. (212) 667-580.

Cross Currents: A Yearbook of Central European Culture. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press. Yearly; $15 per issue; University of Michigan Slavic Language Dept., Ann Arbor MI 48109. (313) 763-4496.

East European Reporter. London: East European Cultural Foundation. Quarterly; $32 per year; 71 Belmont Avenue, London N17 AX, United Kingdom.

Journal of Democracy. Washington: National Endowment for Democracy. Quarterly; $24 per year; P.O. Box 3000, Dept. JD, Denville, NJ 07843.

Soviet/East European Reporter. Washington: Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty, U.S. Government. Weekly; Free; 1201 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

Uncaptive Minds: A Journal of Information and Opinion on Eastern Europe. New York: Institute for Democracy in Eastern Europe. Bimonthly; $15 per year ($10 for AFT members); Whole sets 1987-1990 available for $40; 48 East 21st Street, New York, NY 10010. (212) 677-5801.